



Faustum praelium. Happy battle.

XII. Letter Eleven: Friendship



Distant Friend and Brother!

The snowstorm swirls in endless circles, covering the window with a fine snowy ash and beating against the window glass. A hill of frosty dust has settled on the bush in front of the window, and this snowy pyramid grows with each advancing hour. The paths are as smoke: when you try to go outside, a snowy smoke bursts out from beneath your feet. The air vent wheezes; wind gusts extract moans from the stove pipe. Again and again the snow-white eddies whirl about. The winter decoration has been torn from the trees, and the trees stand with bare outstretched branches, rocking back and forth.

You listen to the noise in the pipe, to the wheezes of the vent. The soul becomes still in dim recollections (or premonitions?) and seems to dissolve in the noises. It is as if you yourself are turning into the whirling snowstorm. The window is already half-covered. A twilight half-darkness has begun to reign in the room. A fluid, bluish shadow lies on the room's objects. I attend to the icon-lamp; the golden bundle of rays becomes brighter. I light a fragrant candle of amber-yellow wax before the Mother of God. We brought this candle from *there*, that is, from where you and I wandered together. I throw several grains of incense into the clay censer with glowing coals and blow on them. Smoky filaments stretch out in all directions. They intertwine and are mixed in a blue billowing cloud.

Let the window be covered by the snow. It's good when that happens. The lamp inside burns more brightly; the incense is more fragrant; the flame of the fragrant candle is more even. Again I am with you. Every day I remember something about you, and then I sit down to write. Thus, from day to day, my life slides toward "the other shore," so that I could look at you at least from there,

by love having defeated death
and by death having defeated the passions . . .

Today there is constantly in my memory that frosty and snowy day when you and I were walking to the Paraclete hermitage. We were walking through the forest. A path had hardly been made through the deep snow, and we kept getting stuck. Nevertheless, we got to the hermitage. Those few days feel like an entire lifetime. Fasting, the common prayer before the large crucifix. We would rise at night; it was cold. In the darkness we would reach the church with difficulty—through snow-banks. Descending beneath the earth, we would stumble. It was half-dark in the church, as in a sepulchre. Do you remember the ancient monk, utterly bent, the one who was like St. Seraphim? Do you remember Father Pavel, the young monk who killed himself with fasting, the one who took communion with us? Even then it was obvious that he did not have long to live. He did in fact die soon after this—from extreme abstinence. You and I took communion together. That was the seed to everything that I now have. For it is not for nothing that our Abba Isidor told us so many times (only now, after his departure, do I begin to understand the secret meaning of his repeated, persistent words): "A brother helped by a brother is as strong as a fortress" (Prov. 18:19). That is what I wish to elucidate to some extent in the present letter.

The spiritual activity in which and by which knowledge of the Pillar of the Truth is given is love. This is love full of grace, manifested only in a purified consciousness. It can only be attained by a long (O how long!) asceticism. In order to strive to attain love—unimaginable for creatures—it is necessary to receive an initial impulse and then to be sustained in one's further motion. Such an impulse is the so common and so rationally incomprehensible revelation of a human person, a revelation that manifests itself as love in the receiver of the revelation: "Love," Heinrich Heine says, "is a terrifying earthquake of the soul." Here, I use the word "love" not in the same sense as before⁷¹⁹ (in Letter Four) but also in the same sense as before, because this love is not the same as that love, though it is nevertheless a foreshadowing of that love, the expected love. Love shakes up a person's whole structure, and after this "earthquake of the soul," he can seek. Love opens for him the doors of the worlds on high, whence drifts the cool of paradise. Love shows him "as if in a light dream" the radiant reflection of the "habitations." For an instant love pulls off the cover of dust from creation even if only at a single point, and reveals

the Divinely created beauty of creation. Love makes it possible to forget about the power of sin, takes us out of ourselves, says an authoritative “Stop!” to the torrent of our selfhood, and pushes us forward: “Go and find in all of life what you have seen in bare outline and only for an instant.” Yes, only for an instant. And returning to itself, the soul longs for the lost bliss, is tormented by the sweet remembrance, as the poet said:

I remember a miraculous moment
when you appeared before me,
like a fleeting vision,
like a genius of pure beauty.^a

Now a choice confronts the soul: either to submerge itself in the sin that eats away at the person or to adorn itself with heavenly beauty.

Beyond the moment of eros in the Platonic sense of the word, *philia* is revealed in the soul—the highest point of earth and the bridge to heaven. Constantly revealing in the person of the loved one the glimmer of primordial beauty, *philia* erases, if only in a preliminary and conditional way, the bounds of selfhood’s separateness, which is aloneness. In a friend, in this other I of the loving one, one finds the source of hope for victory and the symbol of what is to come. And one is thus given preliminary consubstantiality and therefore preliminary knowledge of the Truth. It is upon this peak of human feeling that the heavenly grace of *that* love descends. But in order to have a clear idea of the nuances of the concepts mentioned here, it is necessary to elucidate the content of the Greek verbs of love. Only the language of the Greeks directly expresses these nuances.

The Greek language has four verbs that describe different aspects of the feeling of love: *eran*, *philein*, *stergein*, and *agapan*.⁷²⁰

(1) *eran*, or *erasthai* in poetical language, means to *direct a total feeling at an object*, to surrender oneself to an object, to feel and perceive for it. This verb refers to passionate love, to jealous and even sensual desire. Consequently, *erōs* is a general expression for love and its passion, as well as for love’s desire.

(2) *philein* conforms most of all to the Russian *liubit’* in its general meaning, and is opposed to *misein* and *echthairein*. The nuance expressed by this verb of love is an *inner inclination toward a person* induced by intimacy, closeness, common feeling; therefore, *philein* refers to every kind of love of persons who have some sort of intimate relationship. In particular, *philein* (with or without the addition of *tōi stomati*, i.e., with the lips) signifies the outward expression of this intimacy, to kiss. As finding its fulfillment in the very closeness of the lovers, *philein* includes the element of satisfaction, of self-satiety; according to the explanation of ancient lexicographers, *philein* means “to be satisfied with something, to seek nothing more.” But on the other hand, as a naturally developing feeling, *philein* does not have any moral or, more precisely, moralistic

^a From Pushkin’s poem to A. P. Kern.

nuance. *Philia*, *philotēs* signifies a friendly relation, a tender expression of love, which refers to the inner disposition of the lovers. In particular, *philēma* is a kiss.

(3) *stergein* signifies not a passionate love for or inclination toward a person or thing, not a beckoning to an object which determines our striving, but *a calm and permanent feeling in the depths of the loving one*. Owing to this feeling, the loving one recognizes the object of love as intimately connected with him, and in this recognition the loving one acquires peace of soul. This verb of love refers to organic relation, the relation of kith and kin, a relation that not even evil can destroy. Such is the tender, calm, and confident love of parents for their children, of a husband for his wife, of a citizen for his country. The derivative *storgē* has a meaning that conforms with *stergein*.

(4) *agapan* indicates rational love, which is based on a valuation of the loved one, and which is therefore not passionate, ardent, or tender love. About this love we can give an account to ourselves in our rational mind, because in *agapan* there are fewer sensations, habits, or direct inclinations than convictions. In the common usage of the verbs of love, *agapan* is the weakest and is close in meaning to such verbs as to value, to respect. And the greater the place that is occupied by the rational mind, the smaller will be the place occupied by feeling. Then, *agapan* can even mean to “value rightly, not to overvalue.” Since a valuation is a comparison, a choice, *agapan* includes the concept of a free, selective directing of the will. It would be interesting to clarify the *etymon* of the word examined; however, attempts at an etymology of the root *agapaō* have, unfortunately, not yielded any decisive or even stable conclusions. According to Schenkel, *agapaō* is related to *agamai*, “I am amazed,” “I am enthusiastic,” and perhaps to *agē*, “amazement,” “astonishment”; to *aganos*, “worthy of amazement,” “noble”; to *agallō*, “I glorify,” “I decorate”; to *gaiō*, “I am proud,” “I rejoice”; to *ganomai*, “I rejoice,” “I am merry”; and to the Latin *gau*, *gaudium*, *quadere*.⁷²¹ If this is really the case, then *agapan* evidently means “to have one’s joy in something.” But there are other explanations. According to Prellwitz, *agapan* comes from *aga* (or *agan*), i.e., “very,” and from the root *pa*, entering into *paomai*, “I take,” “I acquire,” so that *agapan* means “to take very much” (*sehr nehmen*) in the sense of readily, greedily.⁷²² However, Prellwitz’s hypothesis is refuted in the further investigations of Brugmann, Fick, and Lagerkranz. In sum, E. Boisacq, the author of the most recent etymological dictionary, declares that the etymology of *agapaō* is “obscure.”⁷²³

The derivative *agapēsis* signifies love in general, without sensuousness or cordiality, while *agapēma* signifies a favorite object.

The relationship between the four verbs of love is such: *agapan* resembles *philein* in many ways, but, since it refers to the rational-moral side of psychic life, it does not include the idea of a spontaneous act coming directly from the heart, an act that would reveal an inner inclination;

agapan is deprived of the nuances of *philein* connoting “to do willingly,” “to kiss” (a kiss, after all, is a “spontaneous,” direct expression of feeling), “to become accustomed to doing.” Aristotle⁷²⁴ characterizes this difference between *philein* and *agapan* by the following comparison of the two verbs: “*kai ho philos tōn hēdeōn, to te gar philein hēdu (oudeis gar philoinos mē chairōn oinōi) kai to phileisthai hēdu phantasia gar kai entautha tou huparchein autōi agathon einai, ou pantes epithumousin oi akisthanomenoi, to de phileisthai agapasthai estin auton di auton*, i.e., a friend is a pleasant thing. It is, after all, pleasant to love (thus, every lover of wine enjoys it) and it is also pleasant to be loved. For here too one sees that he [the loved one] has the good that all who perceive it desire; to be loved (*phileisthai*) is to be appreciated (*agapasthai*) for oneself,” i.e., the loved one is appreciated not for some reason outside himself but precisely for himself.⁷²⁵

Thus, *philein* is an inclination associated with the loved person himself and is produced by life in intimacy and by unity in many things. By contrast, *agapan* is an inclination associated not with the person himself, but rather with his features, with his properties, and therefore it is a somewhat impersonal, abstract inclination. Therefore, *phileisthai* can be explained through *agapasthai* by the addition of *auton di heauton*. *Agapōn* has in view the properties of a person; *philōn* has in view the person himself. The former gives itself an account of its inclination, calculates and weighs; while for the latter the inclination is revealed spontaneously. Therefore, *agapan* has a moral tint, while *philein* does not have any moral tint, for *philein* is spontaneous love, not free by its nature, *amare*, while *agapan* is love as the direction of will determined by the rational mind. This is free love, *diligere* (in particular this latter aspect receives emphasis in Biblical usage), and *agapan*, *proaireisthai*, and *diōkein* are therefore used synonymously by Aristotle.⁷²⁶

As for the relation between *philein* and *eran*, they too are similar in content in many ways; however, *eran* refers to the affective, sensual, and pathological side of love, while *philein* refers to inward attachment and intimacy.

Finally, *storgē* does not signify a passion that erupts, *erōs*,⁷²⁷ a personal inclination, *philia*, or a warm valuation of a person’s qualities, *agapē*. In short, it does not signify a feeling arising in a man as a distinct person. Rather, it signifies attachment, gentleness, and cordiality (innate in man as a member of mankind) in relation to persons with whom there exist habitual, deep-rooted, subpersonal ties: *storgē* is preeminently a generic feeling, a feeling directed at mankind, while the others, i.e., *erōs*, *philia*, and *apagē*, are personal.

In sum, the following features can be noted in *philein*:

(1) immediacy of origin, based on personal contact, but not conditioned by organic ties alone; naturalness.

(2) deep insight into the person himself, and not only a valuation of his qualities.

(3) a quiet, cordial, nonrationalistic character of feeling, but, at the same time, one that is not passionate, not impulsive, not unrestrained, not blind, not turbulent.

(4) closeness, a closeness that is personal and deeply inward.

Thus, the Greek language distinguishes four categories of love: the surging *erōs*, or sensuous, passionate love; tender, organic *storgē*, or the love of kith and kin, attachment; the dry, rational *agapē*, or the love of valuation, respect; and cordial, sincere *philia*, or the love of inward acceptance, personal insight, friendliness. But in fact, none of these words expresses the love of friendship that we are considering in the present letter, a love that combines the aspects of *philia*, *erōs*, and *agapē*, a love the ancients attempted to express in some degree by the compound word *philophrosunē*. In any case, the most suitable word here is *philein* with its derivatives. Let us therefore clarify the etymon and usage of *philos* as compared with synonyms of the same root.

Philos derives from the pronominal root *SFE* (which in Russian gives *svoi*, “own”), which is the origin of four synonyms:

- 1) *Fetēs* or *etēs*,
- 2) *hetairoi*,
- 3) *philos*,
- 4) *idios*.

Consequently, *ph-i-l-o-s* essentially signifies someone who is one’s “own,” close. But other derivatives of the root *SFE* signify “own.” What nuance differentiates *philos* from each of them?

1) The Homeric *Fetai* are the persons one meets frequently, the persons one has much common business with. One could render *Fetai* by the collective *znat’* in the Voronez’ dialect, i.e., the circle of those whom one knows (Russ. *znat’* = “to know”).⁷²⁸ This is the same as the Old Church Slavonic *znaemye*, as for example in Ps. 88:18: “Lover and friend has thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance [*znaemye* in the Old Church Slavonic] into darkness.”

2) In Homer, *hetairoi* signifies allies, those who join in a common enterprise; therefore, Aristarchus already explains *hetairoi* through *sunergoi*, collaborators. *Etes* is a more ancient form of the word *hetairoi*; its content is not limited by a suffix. *Hetairia* and *hetaireia* signify an alliance.

A synonym of *hetairoi*, the Old Russian *tovar*, i.e., *tovarishch* (comrade) and its diminutives *tovarish* and *tovarush*, derives, according to S. Mikutsky,⁷²⁹ from the root *var*, to cover, to close up, and properly signifies defense, defender. The Old Russian *tovar*, *tovary*, i.e., camp, military encampment, signifies defense. The Magyar *var*, fort, fortification, also properly signifies

defense. As for the particle *to*, it is a demonstrative pronoun which is found in the Russian *to-pyrit'sia* (to bristle up); the Lithuanian *toligus* (cf. *ligus*), equal, even; the Polish *tojad* (cf. the Russian *iad*, poison), a poisonous plant; the Czech *roz-to-mily*, very dear. This *to* is probably identical with the demonstrative article used in Bulgarian and even now can be found in certain northern dialects of Russian, especially in the Kostroma dialect.

3) *philos* is a friend, one with whom we are connected by mutual love; *philia* is friendship. The relation between *philos* and *hetairos* is as follows: one is always well disposed toward *philos*, for, in the absence of this well-disposedness, *philos* stops being *philos* for us. By contrast, *hetairoi* are friends of occasion, who are our friends only because we are pursuing with them some common goal. Thus, if *philos* and *hetairos* are compared, the former signifies a person with whom we are intimately linked by love, while the latter signifies only a comrade (*tovarishch*). Sometimes *hetairos* even signifies only a political ally, a member of the same party. *Hetairoi* are linked by a temporary, external, accidental connection, whereas *philo-i* are linked by an indissoluble (or what should be an indissoluble) internally necessary, spiritual connection. In this sense, the following equation is correct: *philos* = *pistos hetairos*, a friend is a faithful comrade, faithful unto the end and in all. Therefore, *peirasthai philōn*, to put friends to the test, is a sign of mistrust and deficiency of friendship.

The ancient grammarians already spoke of this distinction between *hetairos* and *philos*. Thus, according to Ammonius, “*hetairos* and *philos* are different. *Philos* is also *hetairos* but *hetairos* is not completely *philos*. Therefore, Homer says of the wind (Od. 11, 7): ‘Inflating the sails of a true comrade.’ And, on the other hand, one usually calls *philo-i* all those who mutually observe the obligations of friendship, whereas *hetairoi* are, in general, those who live and work together—*en sunētheia kai en sunergiai*.”

4) Finally, the word *idios* signifies “one’s own,” in opposition to that which we have in common with many, i.e., *koinos*, *dēimosios*, and so forth; *idios* signifies peculiarity, i.e., a person or thing in opposition to others, having their own nature.

Such is the natural, human meaning of the verbs of love and their derivatives. But the Holy Scripture, having adopted some of these verbs, gave them a new content, filled them with spirit, and saturated them with the idea of Divine love full of grace. In Scripture, the internal energy of the word has become inversely proportional to the human energy that was connected with the word in the classical language.⁷³⁰

The words *eran* and *erōs* are virtually absent from the books of the Old Testament (in the Septuagint), and they are completely excluded from the books of the New Testament. One should note, however, that the terms *erōs* and *eran* have found a place in ascetic writings. Such mystical fathers as Gregory of Nyssa, Nicholas Cabasilas, Symeon the New Theologian,

et al.⁷³¹ use these terms to designate the higher love for God. In particular, Symeon the New Theologian has a long work about the love for God which is even entitled *Erōtes*, i.e., “Eroses.” In the Holy Scripture, *philein* was filled with spirit and came to express Christian relations of love, based on personal inclination and personal communion. Finally, the formerly colorless and dry *agapan* was filled with spiritual life, and in the newly formed, expressly Biblical *agapē* it began to express profound universal love, the love of higher, spiritual freedom. In some cases *philein* and *agapan* are almost interchangeable; in other cases they are differentiated. Thus, when it is a question of the commandment of love for God and for one’s neighbors, the word *agapan* is always used; however, concerning love for enemies, only *agapan* is used, never *philein*. On the contrary, *philein* and *agapan* are alternately used to denote the Lord’s intimately personal love for Lazarus (John 11:3, 5, 36) and His relationship with his Beloved Disciple (John 20:21; Cf. 13:23, 19:26, 21:7).

The New Testament usage of *agapan* can be summarized in the following way:

(a) *agapan* occurs in all cases where it is a question of direction of will (Matt. 5:43, 44; 1:9, etc.), as well as where inclination rests on a decision of the will, on the choice of the object of love (Heb. 1:9; 2 Cor 9:7; 1 Pet. 3:15; John 13:19; John 12:43; John 21:15–17; Luke 6:32). In order to understand anything of the Lord’s conversation with Peter (John 21:15–17), so decisive for justifying the claims of the Catholics, we must take account of the different meanings of the two verbs of love. By his twice-uttered question, the resurrected Christ indicates to Peter that he violated friendly love—*philia*—for the Lord and that henceforth one can demand of him only universal human love, only that love which every disciple of Christ necessarily offers to every person, even to his enemy. It is in this sense that the Lord asks: “*agapais me?*” The meaning of the question is clear. But in order to express it in our language, one would need to expand the text, perhaps in this way: “Once you were accounted My friend. But now after your renunciation of Me, it does not pay even to speak of friendly love. But there is another love which must be offered to all people. Do you have at least *that love* for me?” But Peter does not even want to hear such a question, and keeps speaking of the authenticity of his *personal, friendly* love: “*Philō se*”—“I am your friend.” That is why he was “grieved” when, despite this twice-uttered insistence on his *philia* for the Lord, the Lord agreed to speak of this kind of love only in the third question, which was probably posed in a tone of reproach and mistrust: “*Phileis me?*—Are you My friend?”

At first the Lord did not speak of friendship at all, and Peter received His question calmly. Peter was so certain of his universal human love for the Lord and so confident that there could be no question concerning this love as far as he was concerned, that he did not even consider it necessary to answer the hidden, immeasurably delicate reproach in these words—

the figure of silence. Perhaps he even did not understand or did not want to understand the Lord in this sense. So it was twice. Then the Lord disclosed His hidden thought and spoke directly of the love of friends. That is what grieved the Apostle: “He was grieved, because, the third time, Jesus said to him ‘Are you my friend?’ (John 21:17a). The ear hears tears in his halting answer: “Lord! You know everything, You know that I am Your friend—*su gignōskeis hoti philō se*” (John 21:17b). Keeping in mind the fact that the words *agapan* and *philein* are not identical, one can scarcely understand this conversation as a restoration of Peter’s apostolic dignity. It is difficult to admit such a meaning if only because Peter did not behave worse (even if not better) with regard to his Teacher than the other apostles. Thus, if Peter lost his apostleship, the other apostles are no different in this respect. Furthermore, nowhere is it seen that he was excommunicated from the “twelve” as an apostate. On the contrary, he does not ascribe any extraordinary guilt to himself; nor do the others. But what Peter really needed was the restoration of friendly, personal relations with the Lord. For Peter did not reject Jesus as the Son of God, did not say that he was renouncing faith in Him as the Messiah (that was not even demanded of him). Rather, he had injured the Lord as a friend injures a friend, and therefore he needed a new covenant of friendship. In other words, the passage analyzed here does not at all concern events of ecclesiastical economy (whether they are understood as the restoration of Peter in apostleship or as the bestowing upon him of extraordinary powers). It exclusively concerns this Apostle’s personal fate and life. This passage is edifying, but it is not dogmatic, and Roman Catholics therefore underscore it in vain. The foregoing discussion explains why the Evangelist considered it possible to place the 21st chapter outside the frame of the exposition. It is clear that he did not see in it something indisputably important, but that could not be the case in its Roman Catholic interpretation.

(b) *agapan* is used where there is selection and, as negative selection, the not taking into account, *eligere* and *negligere* (Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13, Rom. 9:13). Thus, *ho uios mou agapētos* (Luke 9:35; cf. Matt. 12:18) has its parallel in Is. 42:1. (This passage is rendered as *ho eklektos mou* in the Septuagint.)

(c) *agapan* is also used where it is a question of free—not organic—pity (Luke 7:5; 1 Thess. 1:4, etc.).

(d) Finally, *agapan* refers to the historically revealed relation between Christians.

As for *agapē*, it is a word that, as we have said, is wholly alien to the extra-Biblical, ancient secular language.⁷³² It signifies a love that, through a decision of the will, selects for itself its object (*dilectio*), thus becoming a self-negating and passive self-surrender *for* and *for the sake of* the object. Such sacrificial love on a secular basis is known only as a fleeting feeling, an inspiration from another world, not as a determination of life-

activity. The Biblical *agapē* therefore has features that are not human and conditional but Divine and absolute.

This quartet of words of love is one of the greatest jewels in the treasury of the Greek language, and it is hardly possible to survey with a single glance all the advantages offered to the understanding of life by this perfect instrument. Other languages cannot flatter themselves with anything even remotely similar in the domain of the idea of love. This results in endless and useless talks and frictions, as well as the need to invent at least a surrogate of the Greek quartet, which is done by using *several* words to create a term equivalent to a *single* Greek word.

Such complex terms are offered by Arnold Geulincx in his *Ethics*, which appeared in 1665.⁷³³ He posits the following four types of love:

- Amor affectionis*: love of feeling
- Amor benevolentiae*: love of benevolence
- Amor concupiscentiae*: love of attraction
- Amor obedientiae*: love of respect

In comparison with the Greek words the relationship would be roughly such:

- Amor affectionis* = *philia*
- Amor benevolentiae* = *agapē*
- Amor concupiscentiae* = *erōs*
- Amor obedientiae* = *storgē*

Geulincx also recognizes the formal possibility of a *fifth* type of love, which he calls *amor spiritualis* and which he defines as a bodiless being's passive love, a pure spirit's love passion. But he does not recognize this abstract love as something wholly real, which is probably why he does not introduce it in the final classification of the types of love. As for us, we are ready to admit that, perhaps, there is a special life that is characteristic of a bodiless, "astral" (but not thereby spiritual) organization, and that it may find its realization in phenomena of mediumistic ecstasy among spiritists, khlysts, certain mystics, and so on. But this state has been investigated little, and we do not need it for our purposes: I will permit myself to refrain from a special examination of this state here.⁷³⁴

Let us present a scheme that summarizes Geulincx's views of love. (Let us note that some slight contradictions in the following table result from the fact that there are two versions of the *Ethics*. The text of the *Ethics* was written in 1665, whereas the Notes were written in 1675.)

- I. AMOR DILECTIONIS
- (Love of Feeling)
- est quevis humana mente suavitas;*
- (is every sweetness in the human soul);

it is not a virtue itself but a certain accidental reward for virtue, which just as often accompanies virtue as abandons it.

II. AMOR EFFECTIONIS

(Love of Action)

est quodvis firmum propositum

(is every firm intention);

it is not only the firm intention of carrying out what reason considers necessary, but in general it signifies any firm intention of carrying out anything—even injustice or revenge. It equals *amor respectu finis cui*, love directed toward a goal. It is often provoked by *amor affectionis*, but this concerns intemperance (*intemperantia*).

(Neither of these forms of love⁷³⁵ constitutes a virtue; virtue can exist both with and without the first; although without the second there can be no virtue, the latter is nonetheless primary with respect to *amor affectionis*.)

Ia. AMOR SENSIBILIS SEU CORPORALIS, qui est AMOR PASSIO aut AMOR AFFECTIONIS.

(Sensuous or Corporeal Love, which is Love-Passion
or Love of Attraction)

Since the human soul is connected with the body, this love-passion is “the total, single, and unique delight of the soul”: its various names are *Laetitia*, *Deliciae*, *Jucunditas*, *Hilaritas*, *Gaudium*, *Jubilum*; it is that which is delightful in *Desiderium*, in *Spes*, in *Fiducia*; it is love-passion. It is neither bad nor good, but rather an indifferent thing (*res indifferens*), *adiaphora*. It is sometimes produced by love of actions (*amor affectionis*); this frequently happens when one practices virtue.

Ib. AMOR SPIRITUALIS,

(Abstract Love)

qui est approbatio quaedam

(which consists in a kind of approval).

In the forefront here is that approval with which we approve our own actions owing to the fact that they conform to reason or the supreme rule (*suprema regula*). But this abstract love (*amor spiritualis*) is considered almost nothing—*pro nihilo fere ducitur*; for men are addicted to their own sensuousness—*addicti sunt suis sensibus*.

IIa. AMOR OBEDIANTIAE.

(Love of Respect).

This love “constitutes virtue.” What is virtue? *Virtus est propositum faciendi quod jubet Ratio*. Virtue is the intention of doing that which reason commands. Therefore, virtuous love is *Amor quiddam, qui nempe*

firmum propositum faciendi quod Recta Ratio faciendum esse decreverit—a love that has expressed the firm intention of doing that which the just reason considers obligatory.

IIb. AMOR BENEVOLENTIAE
aut benefacientiae.

(Love of Benevolence or Beneficence)

In general it has no relation to virtue. In relation to God, it cannot fail to be shameful and criminal, for, if we experience it, we place ourselves above God and desire to be more worthy than He.

IIc. AMOR CONCUPISCENTIAE.
(Love of Desire)

It has even less relation to virtue.

A religious society is connected and held together by a *double* bond. The first part of this bond is personal connection, which goes from person to person and is based on the feeling of the members of the society that other members, as autonomous units, as monads, have a supra-empirical reality. The second part is the mutual perception of members in the light of the idea of the whole society. In this case, the object of love is not a single person taken by himself but all of society projected on a person. For ancient society, these two bonds were *erōs* as the personal force and *storgē* as the principle of kith and kin. The first of these two principles served as the metaphysical foundation of social being. On the other hand, the natural soil for a *Christian* society as such became *philia* in the personal domain and *agapē* in the social domain. Both forces are spiritualized and transformed, are saturated with grace, so that even marriage, the preeminent repository of *storgē*, and ancient friendship, the preeminent repository of *erōs*, were painted in Christianity in the hues of spiritualized *agapē* and *philia*.

If one reads consecutively three dialogues with the same title, the *Symposium* of Xenophon, that of Plato, and that of St. Methodius of Olympus,⁷³⁶ this ennoblement and spiritualization of the concepts of love stand out with startling plasticity. And this comparison is made the more graphic by the fact that all three dialogues are written according to the same literary scheme and each succeeding dialogue is a conscious ascent over the preceding one. These three dialogues can be likened to stories of a single house built at different heights but having similar arrangements of rooms. Xenophon examines animal life; Plato examines human life; St. Methodius examines angelic life. Thus, preserving the type of organization that is proper to his nature, man ascends higher and higher, to “the prize of high calling” (Phil. 3:14), and spiritualizes all the life-activity of his being.

The *agapic* aspect of a Christian society finds its embodiment in the early Christian ecclesia,⁷³⁷ in a parish, in a monastic cenoby (*koino-bia* = communal living). Feasts of love or *agapes*,⁷³⁸ culminating in a clearly mystical, even mysterial, co-partaking of the Sacred Body and Precious Blood, are the highest expression of this agapic aspect. This blossom of ecclesial life contains the source that nourishes all other life-activity of the ecclesia, from the everyday torment of the mutual bearing of burdens to bloody martyrdom. Such, then, is the agapic side of life.

By contrast, the philic side is embodied in relations of friendship. These relations blossom in sacramental adelphopoeisis and the co-partaking of the Holy Eucharist, and are nourished by this partaking for co-asceticism, co-patience, and co-martyrdom.

The agapic and philic aspects of church life, brotherhood and friendship, run parallel to each other in many ways. One could indicate a number of forms and schemes that appertain equally to both domains. On the basis of a possible (if unlikely) etymology, one could say that a brother (*brat* in Russian) is a taker (*bratel'*) of the burden of life upon himself,⁷³⁹ one who takes (*beret*) upon himself the cross of another. Whatever the origin of the word, a brother is, in essence, one who takes a burden upon himself. But this is precisely what a friend does too. On the other hand, if a friend (*drug* in Russian) is another (*drugoe*) I, can one not say the same thing about a brother?

At points of their highest significance, at their peaks, the two currents, brotherhood and friendship, strive to merge fully. This is easy to understand, for the communion with Christ through the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the source of *all* spirituality. Nevertheless, these two currents are irreducible to each other. Each is necessary in *its own way* in the church economy, just as and in connection with which personal creativity and the continuity of tradition are both necessary, each in its own way. The combination of these currents yields a dual-unity, but not a mixing, not an identification. For a Christian, every man is a neighbor, but far from every man is a friend. An enemy, even a hater and a slanderer, is a neighbor, but even a loving person is not always a friend, for the relations of friendship are profoundly individual and exclusive. Thus, even the Lord Jesus Christ calls the apostles His "friends" only before parting from them, only on the threshold of His agony on the cross and death (see John 15:15). The presence of brothers, however loved they may be, does not therefore remove the necessity of a friend, and vice versa. On the contrary, the need for a friend becomes even more acute from the presence of brothers, while the presence of a friend includes the necessity of brothers. Only if they are insufficiently strong can *agapē* and *philia* appear to be almost the same thing, just as only an impure marriage "resembles" impure[!] virginity, whereas in its limit marriage forms an antinomically coupled pair with the limit of virginity. But the more glorious and

beautiful is “the opened flower of the soul,” the clearer and more certain will be the *antinomic* character of the two sides of love, their dual conjugacy. In order to live among brothers, it is necessary to have a Friend, if only a distant one. In order to have a Friend, it is necessary to live among brothers, at least to be with them in spirit. In fact, in order to treat everyone as oneself it is necessary to *see* oneself at least in one person, to feel oneself in him; it is necessary to perceive in this one person an already achieved—even if only partial—victory over selfhood. Only a Friend is such a one agapic love for whom is a consequence of philic love for him. But for philic love of a Friend not to degenerate into a peculiar self-love, for a Friend not to become merely the condition of a comfortable life, for friendship to have a depth, what is necessary is an outward manifestation and disclosure of the forces that are given by friendship. What is necessary is agapic love for brothers. In the overall church economy (where persons are “three measures of meal” [see Matt. 13:33] and the Church is a “woman”), *philia* is a “leaven,” while *agape* is the “salt” that keeps human relations from spoiling. Without the former there is no ferment, no creativity of church humanity, no movement forward, no pathos of life, whereas without the latter there is no incorruptibility, collectedness, purity, or wholeness of this life. There is no conservation of orders and rules, no harmony of life.

In its foreshadowings of future Christianity, antiquity pushed to the fore both sides of church life. There is, of course, no need to give examples. It is more useful to sketch with two or three strokes how later thought viewed friendship (I mention friendship, because how later thought viewed brotherhood is sufficiently known and does not need to be discussed⁷⁴⁰).

The mystical unity that is revealed in the consciousness of friends permeates all the aspects of their life, makes even the everyday golden. It follows that, even in the domain of simple collaboration, simple camaraderie, a Friend acquires a value greater than his empirical value. Assistance to a Friend acquires a mysterious hue that is dear to the heart; profit from this assistance becomes sacred. The growth of what is empirical in friendship transcends itself, stretches toward the heavens, while its roots plunge into the subempirical depths of the earth. Perhaps (rather, not perhaps but of course) herein lies the reason for the insistence with which both the ancients and the moderns—Christians, Jews, and pagans—praised friendship in its utilitarian, pedagogic, and everyday aspects.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12). This is with regard to

mutual aid in life. But friends also educate each other by mutual friction and adaptation: “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend” (Prov. 27:17). The very closeness of a friend is joyous: “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man’s friend by hearty counsel” (Prov. 27:9). A friend is a support and protection in life: “A faithful friend is a sure shelter; whoever finds one has found a rare treasure. A faithful friend is something beyond price; there is no measuring his worth. A faithful friend is the elixir of life, and those who fear the Lord will find one. Whoever fears the Lord directs his friendship in such a way that as he himself is, so his friend becomes” (Ecclesiasticus 6:14–17).^b

A spiritual value is clearly placed on friendship in these practical utilitarian considerations on the profit and pleasure of friendship, and this spiritual valuation becomes even clearer and more distinct if we remember the obligations connected with a friend. A true friend is recognized only in misfortune: “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov. 17:17). One should be faithful to a friend: “Thine own friend . . . forsake not” (Prov. 27:10), says the Wise One, while the Son of Sirach expresses the same thought more fully: “Do not desert an old friend; the new one will not be his match. New friend, new wine; when it grows old, you drink it with pleasure” (Ecclesiasticus 9:10, 14–15). Assistance to a friend is a “worthy offering to the Lord” (Ecclesiasticus 14:11). Also, “be kind to your friend before you die, treat him as generously as you can afford. Do not refuse yourself the good things of today, do not let your share of what is lawfully desired pass you by” (Ecclesiasticus 14:13–14). Also: “Do not forget your friend in your soul, and do not forget him in your wealth” (Ecclesiasticus 37:6).

Friends are linked in an intimate unity: “there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). Therefore, a friendship cannot be destroyed by anything except by a blow directed against the very unity of the friends, by what strikes at the heart of the Friend as a Friend, by betrayal, mockery of the friendship itself, of its holiness. “The man who pricks the eye makes tears fall, and the man who pricks the heart makes it show morbid feeling. The man who throws a stone at the birds scares them away, and the man who abuses a friend destroys a friendship. Even if you draw the sword against your friend, do not despair, for there is a way to regain your friend; if you open your mouth against your friend, do not be afraid, for there is such a thing as reconciliation. Only abuse and arrogance, and a secret and treacherous blow can cause your friend to take to flight” (Ecclesiasticus, 22:19–22).^c “The man who tells secrets destroys confidence and will not find a friend to his soul. If you love your

^b The Jerusalem Bible translation has been modified here to fit the Russian.

^c The Goodspeed translation has been modified here to fit the Russian.

friend, keep faith with him, but if you tell his secrets, do not pursue him. For sure as a man loses his dead, you have lost your neighbor's friendship, and as you let a bird out of your hand, you have let your neighbor out, and you will never catch him. Do not go after him, for he is far away, and has made his escape like a gazelle from a trap. For you can bind up a wound, and be reconciled after abuse, but for the man who tells secrets there is no hope for reconciliation" (Ecclesiasticus, 27:16–21).^d Finally, higher trust and higher forgiveness must belong to a friend. Having heard that your friend has done something, "question him; perhaps he did not do it; or if he did, let him not do it again. Question your friend, perhaps he did not say it; or if he did, let him not say it again. Question a friend, for often there is slander, and you must not believe everything that is said" (Ecclesiasticus, 19:13–15).^e The greatest trust that can be bestowed upon a man is to believe in him despite condemnations of him, despite evident facts that testify against him, despite all that speaks against him. The greatest trust that can be bestowed upon a man is to accept only the judgment of his conscience, his words. The greatest forgiveness consists in acting as if nothing had happened, in forgetting what had happened. Such a trust and such a forgiveness must be offered to a friend. That is why a friend is the being who is closest to one's heart. That is why the Bible, wishing to indicate the inner closeness of Moses to God, calls him the "friend" of God (Ex. 33:11; James 2:23). The Bible also shows the realization of this ideal of friendship in living reality. I have in mind the extremely touching friendship of David and Jonathan, depicted in just a few words, but for that reason almost painfully touching: "Written as if for me," everyone thinks.

" . . . the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul . . ." (1 Sam. 18:1). "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (1 Sam. 18:3–4). "Then said Jonathan unto David: Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee" (1 Sam. 20:4). ". . . thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself" (1 Sam. 20:8). "Jonathan . . . loved him [David] as he loved his own soul" (1 Sam. 20:17). "David . . . fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded [i.e., wept more]" (1 Sam. 20:41).

The tremendous moans of the 88th Psalm break off with a wail—for a friend. Words can be found for all other sorrows, but the loss of a friend

^d The Goodspeed translation has been modified here to fit the Russian.

^e The Goodspeed translation has been modified here to fit the Russian.

and dear one is beyond words. It is the limit to sorrow, a kind of moral vertigo. Loneliness is a terrible word. "To be without a friend" has a mysterious relation to "to be without God." The deprivation of a friend is a kind of death. "O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee. . . . For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am as a man that hath no strength: Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. . . . Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily unto thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. . . . I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me: thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water: they compassed me about together. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

In his Psalms, the Prophet King builds a bridge from the Old to the New Testament. Thus, his friendship with Jonathan also rises above the level of the utilitarian friendship of the Old Testament and anticipates the *tragic* friendship of the New. The shadow of deep, inexorable tragedy lay upon this Ancestor of Christ. Owing to this shadow, *honorable* earthly friendship became infinitely deepened and infinitely sweet for our heart which has the Gospel. We have come to love tragedy: "the sweet arrow of Christianity makes our heart ache," as V. V. Rozanov^f says.

The *agapē-philía* antinomy was first remarked in books of the Old Testament. Perhaps this antinomy was also dimly foreseen by the Greek "Christians before Christ." But it was first fully disclosed in that Book in which the antinomy of spiritual life was revealed with insane clarity and salvific acuteness: the Gospel.

Equal love for all and each in their unity, concentrated in a single focus of love for several, even for one in his separation from the general unity; disclosure before all, openness with everyone, together with esotericism,

^f A protean giant of the Russian Silver Age, Vasily Rozanov (1856–1919) was a powerful philosopher of generation and sex (before D. H. Lawrence), a rebel who came out against the monastic-Byzantine interpretation of the gospels, and then even against Christianity itself, in the name of Living Life (a favorite concept of Dostoevsky's). But he always felt cozy within the Russian Orthodox Church and never stopped thinking of it as his home. Rozanov became especially close to the Church in the early part of the second decade of this century, a period when Florensky became one of his dearest friends.

Rozanov boldly and insistently exposed the hypocritical nature of the liberalism of much of the Russian intelligentsia. He liked to show himself off as an "immoralist," violating generally accepted ethical norms and shocking the reader with the nakedness of his inner world. He was a destroyer of traditional literary forms, a "completer and culminator" of the old literature. Metaphysician and mystic, Rozanov was interested, first and foremost, in "the imperceptible, the unheralded, the undocumented." His rapt attentiveness to the "unclear and unfocused world" allowed him to discover a new way of viewing ordinary things, to acquire a strikingly unusual vision of life and the history of civilization.

the mystery of the few; the greatest democratism together with the strictest aristocratism; “absolutely all are the elect” together with the elect of the elect; “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15; Cf. Col. 1:23) together with “neither cast ye your pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6); in brief, *agapē-philia*—such are the antinomic dualities of the Good News. The power of the Gospel is accessible to all, does not need an interpreter. But this power is also thoroughly esoteric; not one word in the Gospel can be understood correctly without the “tradition of the elders,” without the interpretation of spiritual guides, successively handing down the meaning of the Gospel from generation to generation. The Book clear as crystal is at the same time the Book with seven seals. *All are equal* in a Christian community and, at the same time, the whole structure of the community is *hierarchical*. Around Christ there are several concentric layers, of increasingly greater and more profound knowledge as He is approached. On the outside are external “crowds of people”; then, the secret disciples and adherents, such as Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Lazarus and his sisters, the women who follow the Lord, and so forth; then, the chosen, the “seventy”; then, the “twelve”; then, the “three,” Peter, James, and John; and finally “one,” “whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20). Such is the characteristic structure of the sacred community of Christ’s disciples. We could also mention sermon by parables, the limiting of the circle of witnesses to one concentric layer or another, the explanation of a parable in private.

“And his disciples asked him, saying What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables: that [let the reader understand!] seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand” (Luke 8:9–10).

Nevertheless, if this and much else indisputably proves the esoteric character of Christianity,⁷⁴¹ not a smaller quantity of (well-known!) data proves its completely exoteric character. Exotericism and esotericism are not rationally compatible. They are reconcilable only in the most profoundly mysterious Christian life, not in rationalistic formulas and rational schemes.

The *friendly, philic* structure of the *brotherly, agapic* community of Christians characterizes not only the hierarchic and philarchic relation of its comembers to the center, but also the smallest fragments of the community. Like a crystal, a Christian community is not fragmented into amorphous, noncrystallized homoeomeric parts. The limit to fragmentation is not the human atom that from itself relates to the community, but a community molecule, a pair of friends, which is the principle of actions here, just as the family was this kind of molecule for the pagan community. This is a new antinomy: the person-dyad antinomy. On the one hand, the separate person is everything; on the other hand, he is

something only where there are “two or three.” “Two or three” is something qualitatively higher than “one,” although it is precisely Christianity that has created the idea of the absolute value of the separate person.⁷⁴² The person can be absolutely valuable only in absolutely valuable communion, although one cannot say that the person is prior to communion or that communion is prior to the person. The primordial person and primordial communion, which rationally are seen as excluding each other, are given as a fact in Church life. They are given together and at the same time. And if in the *emergence* of the one or the other we cannot conceive their ontological equivalence, we are even less capable of conceiving them as ontologically unequivocal in actualized reality. The spiritual life of a person is inseparable from his preliminary communion with others, but the communion is incomprehensible without an already-present spiritual life. This connectedness of communion and spiritual life is expressively indicated in the Holy Book.

Having called “twelve” disciples, the Lord sends them to preach “by two and two,” and this sending forth by “two and two” is connected with the giving of “power over unclean spirits,” that is, with the charisma—above all—of chastity and virginity: “and he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits” (Mark 6:7).

The sending of the “seventy” signified the same thing; having chosen “seventy,” the Lord also “sent them two and two” (Luke 10:1). Here, He gave them the gift of healing (Luke 10:9) and the power over devils (Luke 10:17, 19, 20). These texts of Mark and Luke also contain an implied hint at knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom, even if only a partial knowledge. For, here, the disciples are being sent to preach, and preaching presupposes such knowledge. It is also not by chance, one must suppose, that John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to Christ when it is necessary to look spiritually into the Person of Jesus and to determine if He is Christ (Matt. 11:2). But it is necessary to point out that the passage “he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him (*pempsas duo tōn mathētōn autou eipen autōi*)” is corrected by another interpretation of the text⁷⁴³ to read: *dia tōn mathētōn autou*, i.e., “he let it be known to him through his disciples.” But this correction, even if it has textual justification, does not change the meaning, for the number two is confirmed by Luke 7:19: “And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying . . . (*kai proskalesamenos duo tinas tōn mathētōn autou ho Ioanēs epempsen pros tou Kurion legōn*).”

Thus, the knowing of mysteries, i.e., the inward-directed bearing of spirit (like the doing of miracles, i.e., the outward-directed bearing of spirit, or, more briefly, the bearing of spirit in general), is based on the abiding of the disciples two by two. “Two” is not “one plus one,” but something essentially greater, something essentially more manifoldly sig-

nificant and powerful. “Two”⁷⁴⁴ is a new compound of spiritual chemistry, where “one plus one” (the leaven and meal of the parable) is transformed qualitatively and forms a third thing (the leavened whole).

This thought, unfolded, passes like a scarlet thread through the entire 18th Chapter of Matthew. Here I will note only a few links of the chain of thoughts.

As regards the conversations of the disciples about the brother who has sinned, the Lord indicates that they have the power to bind and to loose (Matt. 18:18). But since the essence of this power lies in spiritual knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom, in the perception of the spiritual world and God’s will,⁷⁴⁵ the inner accent of Matt. 18:18 is placed on reminding the disciples of their *gnosis*, of their *spirituality*. Furthermore, in Matt. 18:19, the Lord paraphrases His thought, as it were, translating what he has just said into other concepts, but leaving untouched the inner meaning of what He said: “Again I say unto you (*palin amēn legō humin*) [i.e., “once again,” “I repeat”], That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For (*gar*) where two or three (*duo ē treis*) are gathered together in my name (*eis to emon onoma*), there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:19–20).

The knowledge of mysteries or, more particularly, the power to bind and to loose is again—*palin*—the co-asking of two who have agreed on earth as touching anything, i.e., of two who have fully humbled themselves the one before the other, who have fully overcome contradictions, contra-thoughts, and contra-feelings to reach consubstantiality the one with the other. Such co-asking is always fulfilled, says the Savior. Why is this so? It is because the gathering of two or more in the Name of Christ, the co-entering of people into the mysterious spiritual atmosphere around Christ, communion with His grace-giving power⁷⁴⁶ transforms them into a new spiritual essence,⁷⁴⁷ makes of two a particle of the Body of Christ, a living incarnation of the Church (*the Name of Christ is the mystical Church!*), ecclesializes them. It is clear that Christ is then “in the midst of them.” He is “in the midst of them” like a soul in the midst of every member of the body that it animates. But Christ is consubstantial with His Father, and therefore the Father does what the Son asks. The power to bind and to loose is based on a *symphony* of two on earth about *every* work. It is based on the victory over selfhood, the possession by two of one soul. And this possession is understood now not as conditional and limited but as perfect and unbounded. But in the first place, one can seek to attain this on earth, but it is not attainable unconditionally. Secondly, the measure of attainment is also the measure of humility. Directly in response to what the Lord has explained (“then came” [Matt. 18:21]), the self-assured and impetuous Peter asks Him: “how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” That is, he wishes to

know the norm and limit of forgiveness (seven is the number of fullness, completion, perfection, limit⁷⁴⁸). But this “till seven times,” this limit of forgiveness, would precisely indicate the fleshly limitedness of the one forgiving the sin. It would indicate absence of true spiritual love in him. (A wholly different matter is the forgiveness of the sin against the Holy Spirit, against the Truth Itself.) It would be a variant of selfhood. Relations that are limited to any extent by a multiplicity of forgiveness do not have any Christian force. These are nonspiritual relations. That is why the Lord answers the Apostle in this way: “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:22), that is, without any limit, without end, wholly and with perfect mercy (for “seventy times seven” signifies not finiteness but perfect fullness, actual infinity).⁷⁴⁹

Thus, to condemn a man for a sin against the one who condemns him, one must stand not on a human but on a Divine height. One must know the Divine mysteries. Condemnation would consist in the fulfillment of God’s will. But the mysteries of the Kingdom can be known only in perfect love, reaching among two a symphony in all things. (A particular case of this is *starchestvo*⁸). At present this symphony cannot be realized by human efforts. It can only be in the process of realization, in infinite humility before one’s friend, in the forgiveness of sins against one “until seventy times seven.”

The Lord’s enigmatic⁷⁵⁰ parable about the “unjust steward” (Luke 16:1–8) expresses the same idea of forgiveness as the basis of friendship. The rich man of the parable is God, rich in creativity, while the steward is man. Man is placed as the caretaker of God’s estate, of the life that has been entrusted him, of the powers and capacities that were given to him to be fulfilled, to be multiplied (cf. the parable of the “talents”). But he squanders his life, does not fulfill his creative capacity, wastes God’s estate, and God demands that he give an account. Man must abandon everything that he imagines he possesses and that, in fact, has only been entrusted to him. He will be deprived of all the outward powers that he used in life, then of the body with its organs, and finally of the soul’s organization, which will be consumed in the fire of judgment. He will become “naked” and “poor.” He will be put “outside” the house of God, for the lord tells him: “thou mayest be no longer steward” (Luke 16:20).

The steward understands that his position is hopeless, for he lived only on God’s estate, not on his own. He understands that he does not have and cannot have any of his own creativity of life. “Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my Lord taketh away from me my stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses” (Luke 16:3–4). Thus, being expelled from God’s house, he wants

⁸ See note *f* on pp. 8–9.

to assure himself a place if only in the houses of other people, i.e., in souls, in prayers, in the thoughts of other people—in the memory of the Church. What measures does he take to be remembered, to be received in others' houses? "So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, an hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore" (Luke 16:6–7). In other words, the unjust steward forgives part of what the lord's debtors owe. In his consciousness, he forgives their sins before the Lord. Moralistically, juridically, legally, this act is a new transgression against the Lord. This act is "unjust," for "justice" is the application of the law of identity and, "justly," one should speak of a debtor (especially of a debtor to someone else) as a debtor, not as of a non-debtor, and of each debt (especially of a debt to someone else) as it is, not as it is not. Legally, it is, in general, impossible to forgive a sin. But, in any case, it is by no means possible to forgive a sin not against oneself but against God. But, in spiritual life, this "injustice" is what is required: conscious of oneself as guilty before God, as a debtor before God, as sinning against God and needing God's forgiveness, one must also forgive others their sins, reduce the measure of their guilt. Yes, we have no "right" to forgive what constitutes a sin not against us but against God—what touches not us but God. It even seems highly natural that, zealously guarding God's glory, one should call attention to the guilt of other people, one should underscore that we "do not sympathize" with their sins, that we are almost ready to consider God's debtors our own debtors. But "the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light" (Luke 16:8). By unjustly forgiving the sins of others, we justify ourselves, the unjust "children of this world," more than we could justify ourselves as the just "children of light" by justly condemning the sins of others. But this must be done privately, individually, secretly with each sinner. His sin will truly be covered in order really to reduce it in one's consciousness, and not merely to show one's generosity toward others. Such an open forgiveness would not only fail to reach its target; it would not only fail to cover the sin of one's brother. It would even provoke in others the temptation to sin: "Whatever I do, I'll be forgiven."

This parable represents the Orthodox understanding of the canons as opposed to the Catholic understanding. According to the latter, a canon is a norm of ecclesiastical law that must be fulfilled and the violation of which must be compensated by a "satisfaction."⁷⁵¹ By contrast, according to the Orthodox understanding, canons are not laws but regulative symbols of the church society. Canons have never been fulfilled perfectly,

and one cannot expect that they will ever be fulfilled exactly. But they should always be kept in mind, so that we remain clearly conscious of our guilt before God. "Here, remember," the Holy Church says to its children as it were, but to each privately, in secret, "remember how one should be and what should justly happen to you because you do not satisfy God's justice. But your guilt is reduced not because you are good, not for your merits, but because God is merciful, long-suffering, and infinitely full of grace. So, be humble, and do not condemn others when they are guilty, even if you see their guilt just as undeniably as if it were a promissory note."

The property of the lord in the parable is all good and all just. But the steward, to forgive part of the debts of the lord's debtors, essentially took for himself from the lord's estate the part of the debt that was forgiven and gave it from himself to the debtors, as it were. The debt that he forgave the debtors was, *in relation to him*, an illegitimate property, a "mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke 16:9). For, in itself, no property is righteous or unrighteous, legitimate or illegitimate. It simply is, and it is good.⁷⁵² But every property, in relation to the person who possesses it, is legitimate or illegitimate, righteous or unrighteous. And, for the steward, the lord's estate that he wasted, first on himself and then on others, and that he therefore viewed as his own was a "mammon of unrighteousness" in both senses.

In the same way, we do not have the possibility of paying off a sin by using the capital of God's mercy, of God's goodness. And, for us, if we appropriate it, this possibility is a "mammon of unrighteousness." But since, even without this, we constantly squander this "mammon" on ourselves in all ways, on the paying off of our sins, then the only thing left to us (as a measure in case we are separated from these riches of God's mercy) is to assure for ourselves a place in the hearts of other people, in the "everlasting habitations." And then the Lord will perhaps praise our resourcefulness. This assurance of a place for ourselves is nothing else but the creation of relations of friendship. This is how the Savior Himself explains the parable: "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by the mammon of unrighteousness [*philous ek tou mamōna tēs adikias*]: that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (Luke 16:9).

I return now to the idea that friendship "by two and two" was realized among Christ's disciples and that this relationship of "by two and two" was expressed in the fact that the disciples were sent "by two and two" for preaching. For them, this friendship was a vital work, not a transitory and accidental collaboration of fellow travelers and fellow workers. This stability of dyadic relations is clearly indicated by the firmly established association of apostolic names in pairs. "Enumerations of the apostles

exhibit a clear intention of saying the names in pairs, which was probably the way they were sent by Christ to preach, to spread the Gospel during the Lord's lifetime,"⁷⁵³ affirms a well-known exegete.

If this is the case, then one can propose that these pairs are not accidental but are held together by something stronger than external considerations relating to the convenience of executing a common work together. In fact, three of these pairs are defined by relations of kin, blood, and even brotherhood. These are the pairs:

Andrew and Peter, sons of Jonah;
James and John, sons of Zebedee;
James and Judas Simon(?) Lebbeaus-Thaddaeus, sons of
Alphaeus.

With three other pairs, the external priming for the formation of the spiritual connection is the kinship of characters: perhaps unity of world-feeling or worldview, or certain traits in the lives of these apostles before or after they became followers of Christ. These pairs comprise:

Philip and Nathanael Batholomew;
Matthew Levi and Thomas Didymus;
Judas (Simon) Iscariot and Judas(?) Simon Canaanite-Zelote
Cleopas(?).⁷⁵⁴

Finally, one can add two more pairs:

Timothy and Paul;
Luke and Silas.

Such a connection between charismatic gifts and the friendship of two is expressed with great clarity in popular legends, which, in general, frequently "distort" the historical facts in favor of a higher truth and meaning of the tale.⁷⁵⁵ According to the popular consciousness, the gift of healing is given only to pairs of the Lord's followers, not to separate, "aphilic" persons isolated from one another. Therefore, as Mommsen⁷⁵⁶ and then A. P. Shestakov⁷⁵⁷ pointed out, the healer apostles, as well as healer saints in general, usually appear in pairs in folk tales. Here are examples: The Apostles Peter and John and Peter and Paul. The Saints Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Ermolaus, Samson and Diomedes, Triphonus and Thalaleus, and Mucius and Anicetas.

This pairedness of spirit-bearing persons is unquestionable. And whatever the initial stimuli to their friendship, one must conclude that the gifts the friends received in their friendship necessarily led to the mysterious pairing of their persons. The distribution by pairs was already noticed by ancient exegetes.

Thus, according to St. Jerome, "Two by two are called and two by two are sent the disciples of Christ, for love does not abide with one, which is

why it is said: Woe unto the solitary (*Bini vocantur, et bini mittuntur discipuli Christi, quoniam caritas non consistit cum uno. Unde dicitur: Vae soli*).⁷⁵⁸

St. Augustine says: “As for the fact that he sends them two by two, this is the sacrament of love, either because two is the commandment of love or because no love can exist between fewer than two (*quod autem binos mittit, sacramentum est caritatis, sive quia duo sunt caritatis praecepta, sive quia omnis caritas minus quam inter duos esse non potest*).”⁷⁵⁹

The sacrament of love, *sacramentum caritatis*, is the highest motive for the life two by two; the word *caritas* is probably put here for want of a more exact Latin term for the true love of friends. But there is also a *lower* motive, inasmuch as people are weak, have need of external support from a friend and of a restraint against temptations: here a friend is also necessary, even if only as a witness, who can in time pull one away from a fall. Thus reasoned St. John Chrysostom in the 14th chapter of his *Commentaries on Genesis* and St. Gregory of Nazianzus in *Discourse 17*. The very presence of another person is capable of dissipating the tension of a sinful thought. St. Seraphim of Sarov was not eager to counsel people to live in the desert. He says by way of explanation: “In a monastery, monks struggle with hostile powers as with doves; in the desert they struggle with them as with lions and leopards.” This aspect, the aspect of mutual watching-over, has been particularly etched in the consciousness of monks, especially Catholic ones. But this topic is outside the scope of my work.⁷⁶⁰ I will only remark that our Orthodox prohibitions against monks taking solitary walks, St. Seraphim’s prohibition against his disciples living alone, and so on also apply here.

The kind of importance that the Lord placed on *friendship* is shown by the parable of the unjust steward. It is remarkable that, in this parable, there is no mention of charity from the “mammon of unrighteousness,” of alms to the poor. No, the immediate goal is not philanthropy but the acquisition of friends for oneself, friendship: “And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by the mammon of unrighteousness” (Luke 16:9). St. Clement of Alexandria was among the first to direct attention to this passage. He says: “The Lord did not say ‘Give’ or ‘Offer’ or ‘Be charitable to’ or ‘Help.’ He said: ‘Make to yourselves friends,’ because friendship is expressed not only in giving but also in perfect self-sacrifice and prolonged co-habitation.”⁷⁶¹

The mystical unity of two is a condition of knowledge and therefore of the appearance of the Spirit of Truth that gives this knowledge. Together with the subordination of creation to God-given inner laws, and with the fullness of chastity, this unity corresponds to the coming of the Kingdom of God (i.e., of the Holy Spirit) and the spiritualization of all creation. A remarkable tradition has been preserved in the so-called Second Epistle of St. Clement of Rome to the Corinthians:

“When the Lord Himself was asked by someone: ‘When will Thy Kingdom come?’—He answered: ‘When two will be one, and the exterior will be like the interior, and the male together with the female will be not male and not female.’”⁷⁶²

Clement interprets this enigmatic agraphon in the following way: “‘Two are one’ when two would speak the truth to each other and when one soul would unhypocritically be in two bodies. And ‘the exterior will be like the interior’ means that [Christ] calls the interior the soul and the exterior the body. Thus, in the same way that your body appears, thus also your soul will be made manifest in your beautiful acts (*en tois kalois ergois*). [NB: Clement says *kalois*, beautiful, not *agathois*, good.] And ‘male with female is not male and not female’ means that a brother in seeing a sister should not think of her as a woman, nor should she think of him as a man.”⁷⁶³ “When you do this”—he says—“the Kingdom of My Father will come.”⁷⁶⁴

But this interpretation, a highly probable one, refers more to the external psychological side of the Kingdom to Come and does not penetrate deeply into the ontological conditions under which such a life of the soul will become possible. It appears to me that the agraphon speaks clearly enough for itself; all one has to do is to take it as it is. But what is important for me now is only the first term of the agraphon, i.e., “when two will be one,” i.e., an indication of a friendship brought to its culmination. And, here, friendship is understood not so much from the point of view of actions and feelings, i.e., *nominalistically*, as from the point of view of the metaphysical basis upon which perfect unity of soul is possible, i.e., *realistically*.

The holy fathers often repeat the idea of the necessity—along with universal love, *agapē*—of individualized friendship, *philia*. While the former must offer itself to every man despite his uncleanness, the latter must be careful in choosing a friend. For one grows intertwined with a friend; one receives a friend, together with his qualities, into oneself. In order that both do not perish, what is needed is careful selection. “*Ouk estin ouden ktēma beltion philou, ponēron andra mēdepou ktēsēi philou*, i.e., there is no acquisition better than a friend, but never choose an evil man as your friend,” says St. Gregory of Nazianus.⁷⁶⁵ In another place he lavishly spends all the best words to give an accurate assessment of the importance of friendship. “A faithful friend cannot be replaced by anything,” he begins, addressing St. Gregory of Nyssa, “and there is no measure to his kindness. ‘A faithful friend is a strong protection’ (Ecclesiasticus, 6:14) and ‘a fortress’ (Prov. 18:19). A faithful friend is a treasure with a soul. A faithful friend is more precious than gold and a multitude of precious stones. A faithful friend is ‘a garden inclosed,’ ‘a spring shut up’ (Song of Songs 4:12), which are temporarily opened and temporarily used. A faithful friend is a haven of repose. And if he is distinguished by prudence,

he is the more precious. If he is learned with all-embracing learning, as our learning once was and as it should be, this is so much the better. And if he is a child of light (John 12:36) or a 'man of God' (1 Tim. 6:11), or one who comes 'near to the Lord' (Ex. 19:22), or 'a man' of the best 'desires' (Dan. 9:22), or one worthy of such a name that is used by the Scripture to distinguish high and godly men, men of heaven, then this is a gift of God and is clearly greater than our worth."⁷⁶⁶

Once a friend is chosen, the friendship with him has, according to Gregory of Nazianzus, features of unconditionality. Gregory says: "I posit a limit to hate, not to friendship, for hate must be moderated, but friendship should not know any bounds."⁷⁶⁷

In what is this limitlessness of friendship expressed? It is chiefly expressed in the bearing of the *infirmities* of one's friend, without limit, in mutual patience, mutual forgiveness. "Friendship bears all that it suffers or hears."⁷⁶⁸

The interests of friends merge. The property of one becomes the property of the other, and the good of one becomes the good of the other.

"For when one among good ones [i.e., a monk] experiences something good, then, owing to the ties of friendship, there is common joy among all of them."⁷⁶⁹

"Unity of thought comes from the Trinity, since, by nature, the main characteristic of the Trinity is unity and inner peace."⁷⁷⁰

Thus, Abba Thallassios echoes St. Gregory: "Love, constantly extended toward God, unites the lovers with God and with each other."⁷⁷¹ In another place, he says more definitively: "Only love unites creatures with God and with each other in unity of thought."⁷⁷²

Similar thoughts were expressed by other fathers. Let me present several excerpts taken at random. St. Basil the Great sees communion as the profoundest organic need of people: "Who does not know that man is a meek and sociable animal, not a solitary and savage one? Nothing, after all, is so proper to our nature as to have communion with one another, to need one another, and to love those of one's own kind (*kai agapan to homophulon, qui ejusdem sunt generis*)."⁷⁷³

Between lovers the membrane of selfhood is torn. And, in a friend, one sees oneself as it were, one's most intimate essence, one's *other* I. But this other I is not different from one's own I. A friend is *received* into the I of the lover, is profoundly agreeable (*priatnyi* in Russian), or acceptable (*priemlemyi*), to the lover. A friend is admitted into the organization of the lover, is not alien to him in any way, is not expelled from him. The loved one (a *priatel*)⁷⁷⁴ [friend but also one who is "received"] in the original sense of the word) is received by his friend and nestles, like a mother's child, beneath his heart. Thus, the Poet says (though about something somewhat different):

There is darkness here, but heat and cries there.
 I roam as if in dream,
 feeling only one thing vividly:
 You are with me and all of you are in me.⁷⁷⁵

The soul's reception (*priatie*) of a friend's I unites two separate streams of life. This living unity is achieved not as the enslavement of one person by the other, and not even as the conscious slavery of one person in relation to the other. Nor can a unity of friends be called a concession. It is precisely a unity. One feels, desires, thinks, and speaks not *because* the other spoke, thought, desired, or felt in the same way, but because both feel one feeling, desire with one will, think one thought, speak with one voice. Each lives by the other, or rather, the life of the one and the other flow from a common center, one in itself, placed by the friends above themselves by a creative act. Therefore, the different manifestations of this center are always harmonious *by themselves*. Yes by themselves—not through a straining of feeling, or will, or thought, or verbal formula taken as a principle of unity. Whether it be a verbal formula or a system of such formulas giving a program, this is nevertheless a homoiousian unity or alliance, which is not at all the same thing as a homoiousian unity or a unity in the strictest sense of the word.⁷⁷⁶

Friends define their friendship not in the plane of semi-illusory and wingless phenomenality (the "psychic" domain) but in the noumenal depths. Therefore, friends form a dual-unity, a dyad. They are not they, but something greater: one soul.

According to Marc Minutius Felix, his friend Octavius loved him so ardently that in all important and serious matters and even in all trivial matters, even in amusements, their desires agreed in everything. "One could think that the two of them shared one soul."⁷⁷⁷

It cannot be any other way, for friends, affirms Lactantius, "could not be linked by such a faithful friendship if the two did not have one soul, one thought, one will, and one opinion."⁷⁷⁸

A common life is a common joy and a common suffering. Friendship involves not co-rejoicing and co-suffering, but rather the more profound states of consonant rejoicing and consonant suffering. The states of the former type go from the periphery of the soul to its center and refer to those who are comparatively more remote from us. But the joy and suffering of those who are very close to us, arising in the very center of our soul, are directed from there to the periphery: this is not the reflection of an alien state, but one's own consonant state, one's own joy and one's own suffering. Aristotle, with reference to suffering, was among the first to note this difference of experiences.⁷⁷⁹ And Euripides, in his tragedy *Herakles*, gives us an artistic demonstration of such a difference,

comparing the sufferings of Amphytrion and Herakles and Amphytrion and Theseus.⁷⁸⁰

But if intimate ties are, in general, favorable for consonant experiences, the ground that is preeminently suited to them is friendship: according to St. Maximus the Confessor, “a faithful friend considers the misfortunes of his friend to be his own, and bears them together with him, suffering unto death.”⁷⁸¹ For, in general, the distinctive advantage of love, according to St. Nilus of Sinai, is that it unites everyone, unto the most inward disposition of the soul. Owing to such a unity, everyone transmits his sufferings to all others, while receiving from others their sufferings.⁷⁸² Everyone is responsible for everyone else and everyone suffers for everyone else.

Being united thus, by their essence, and forming a rationally unknowable dual-unity, friends enter into a unity of feeling, will, and thought that completely excludes divergence of feeling, will, and thought. But, being *actively* posited, this unity is not at all a mediumistic mutual-possession of persons, not their immersion in an impersonal and indifferent (and therefore unfree) element of the two. This unity is not a dissolution of individuality, not its depreciation, but its raising, consolidating, fortifying, and deepening. This is true all the more certainly for friendship. In friendship, the irreplaceable and incomparable value and originality of each person is revealed in all its beauty. In another I, a person discovers his own actualized potential, made spiritually fruitful by the other I. According to Plato, the loving one gives birth in the loved one.⁷⁸³ Each of the friends obtains a foundation for his own person, finding his own I in the I of the other. “He who has a friend,” says Chrysostom, “has another self.”⁷⁸⁴

In another place, Chrysostom says: “The loved one for the loving one is what he himself is. The nature of love is such that the loving one and the loved one constitute not two separate persons but one man.”⁷⁸⁵

Separateness in friendship is only crudely physical, exists only for vision in the most external sense of the word. Therefore, in the sticheron for the day of the Three Bishops, on January 30, one sings of them, who lived in different places, as “separated in body but united in spirit.” But in communal life even the bodies become one, as it were. Thus, the hieroschema-monk Anthony of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, in describing the death of the Archimandrite Meletios, writes: “For more than thirty years we were in the closest communion of friendship; and during the last three years we became like one body and one soul.”⁷⁸⁶

The power and the difficulty of friendship lie not in the fireworks of the ascesis of the moment but in the constantly burning patience that lasts a lifetime. This is the quiet flame of holy oil, not the explosion of a gas. Heroism is always only an ornament, not the essence of life and, as an ornament, it necessarily has a theatrical side. Taking the place of life,

heroism inevitably degenerates into greasepaint, into a pose of greater or lesser verisimilitude. The truest heroism lies in friendship and in what animates it. But, here too, heroism is only a flower of friendship, not its stalk and not its root. The heroic squanders; it does not gather. The heroic always lives off something else, is nourished by juices acquired through everyday toil. Here, in the darkness of everyday life, the subtlest and gentlest roots of friendship are concealed, acquiring true life. They are not visible to any gaze, and sometimes they are not even suspected by anyone. But they nourish the life given in the present, whereas the open flower of heroism, if it is not a barren flower, will produce only the seed of another, future friendship.⁷⁸⁷

The love of friends refers not to separate spiritual high points, not to the meetings, impressions, and holidays of life, but to all of life's reality, even to banal, everyday experience. The love of friends requires attention to oneself precisely where the "hero" lets himself go utterly. If it has been said that no man is great for his valet, or rather that no man is a hero for his valet, this is because one is a hero and the other is a valet. For heroism does not express the essential greatness of a person but only dons it for a while. For a valet, heroism remains only itself. But, in friendship, it is the other way around. Every external act of one friend seems to the other insufficient because, knowing the friend's soul, he sees how every action fails to conform to the inner greatness of his friend's soul. As for heroes, some are amazed by them, others ignore them; some are carried away by them, others hate them. But a friend is never amazed by his friend and is never indifferent to him. He is not fascinated by him and does not ignore him. He loves, and for love precisely this soul, uniquely this beloved soul, is infinitely dear and priceless, outweighs the whole world with all its temptations. For *philia* knows a friend not by his outward pose, not by the dress of heroism, but by his smile, by his quiet talk, by his weaknesses, by how he treats people in ordinary human life, by how he eats and sleeps.

One can deliver speeches rhetorically—and deceive. One can suffer rhetorically. One can even die rhetorically and deceive with one's rhetoric. But one cannot deceive with everyday life, and the true test of a soul's authenticity is through life *together*, in the love of friends. Any person can accomplish one or another act of heroism. Anyone can be interesting. But only my friend can smile, speak, and comfort as he does, no one else. Yes, no one and nothing in the world can compensate me for his loss. The revelation of a person begins in friendship, and therefore real, profound sin and real, profound saintliness begin in it too. One can tell a great lie about oneself in many volumes of writing; but one cannot utter even the smallest lie in living communion with a friend. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man" (Prov. 27:19). The relationship of the everyday and the heroic is like the relationship

between the features of a face and chance specks of light reflected on it. These specks can produce an effect but they do not touch what is dear or repulsive for us in the face, what is attractive or hateful. Friendship is indeed built on these half-shadows, defining the features of the face, on smiles, simply on life—on that very same life where love or hate gains definitive hegemony. Take away from a man his heroism and he will remain what he is. Attempt to remove from him in thought his deep saintliness or deep love, his secret life and secret sin, expressed in every gesture, and nothing will remain of this man, similar to what happens if hydrogen is removed from water.

This final disintegration of a man, this fractional distillation, is wholly accomplished by the Holy Spirit, at the end of time. But here and now this disintegration can be accomplished through a man who loves as a friend, for only he will indicate to us our hidden treasure. Here, once again, the metaphysical nature of friendship is revealed. Friendship is not only psychological and ethical in nature but, first and foremost, ontological and mystical in nature. In all ages, all the profound contemplators of life viewed friendship in this way. What is friendship? Self-contemplation through a Friend in God.

Friendship is the seeing of oneself with the eyes of another, but before a third, namely the Third. The I, being reflected in a friend (Russ. *drug*), recognizes in the friend's I its own other (*drugoe*) I. The image of a mirror naturally comes to mind here, and, indeed, this image has been knocking on the door for many centuries beyond the threshold of consciousness. Plato uses it. According to the greatest of those who know, Plato's Socrates, a friend sees himself "in a loving one, as in a mirror."⁷⁸⁸ And, after almost two dozen centuries, Schiller echoes him almost exactly: "Posa saw himself in this beautiful mirror [i.e., in his friend Don Carlos] and rejoiced at his own image."⁷⁸⁹ This acquisition and recognition of oneself in a friend's consonant feeling is concretely represented in Carlos' words to Philipp:

How sweet, how good in a beautiful soul
to transform oneself; how sweet it is to think
that our joy paints the cheeks of our friend,
that our sadness presses on another breast,
that our sorrow makes other eyes wet.⁷⁹⁰

But even before Plato, Homer remarked about friendship that "divinity always leads like to like"⁷⁹¹ and acquaints them (Plato refers to this passage in *Lysis*). Nietzsche, following Schiller, affirms that every man has his *metron* and that every friendship is two persons but one common *metron*, or that, in other words, friendship is *the identical order* of two souls.⁷⁹²

But a friend is not only I but also another I, another for I. However, I is unique and everything that is other with respect to I is already not-I. A

friend is I that is not-I. A friend is a *contradictio*, and an antinomy is interwoven with the very concept of a friend. If the thesis of friendship is identity and similarity, its antithesis is non-identity and non-similarity. I cannot love what is not I, for then I would admit in myself something foreign to myself. Nevertheless, in loving, I desire not what I myself am. Indeed, why do I need what I already have? This self-contradictoriness of friendship is disclosed by the young Plato in *Lysis*, and it is revealed anew by Schiller.

“Love,” he says about friendship (in contrast to what was cited above), “arises not between two souls who make the same sound but between souls that sound in harmony.” Also: “With satisfaction,” writes Julius to his friend Raphael, “I see my feelings in my mirror, but with ardent pleasure I devour your higher feelings, which I lack.”⁷⁹³

An exchange of essence, a mutual fulfillment, occurs in love. “When I hate,” affirms Schiller by the hand of his Julius, “I take something away from myself; when I love, I am enriched by what I love.”⁷⁹⁴ Love enriches; God (*Bog* in Russian), having perfect love, is Rich (*Bogatyi*). He is rich with His Son, Whom He loves. He is Fullness.

Similarity and nonsimilarity, or oppositeness, are equally necessary in friendship, forming its thesis and antithesis. In the Platonic dialectic this antinomic character of friendship is removed, or rather, it is covered by the concept of ownness, combining thesis and antithesis. Friends, according to Plato, “are by nature own to each other (*oikeioi*),”⁷⁹⁵ in the sense that one is a part of the other, fulfilling the metaphysical insufficiency of the other’s essence and therefore homogeneous with the other. But neither the logical notion of *ownness* nor the equivalent mythical concept of the androgyne,⁷⁹⁶ everlasting in its plasticity, can fill the chasm between the two pillars of friendship, for this concept and this image are, in fact, nothing else but an abbreviated designation of the antinomy of I and not-I.

Friendship can also be compared to consonance. Life is a continuous series of dissonances. But through friendship they are resolved. In friendship, social life acquires its meaning and conciliation. Just as a strict unison does not give anything new, whereas tones that are neighbors but of different pitch are combined into sounds intolerable to the ear, so it is in friendship: an extreme closeness in the structure of souls but with the absence of identity leads to constant jolts, to sudden dissonances intolerable in their unexpectedness and unpredictability, disturbing like a blinking light.

Here, in the concept of consonance, we once again have an antinomy, for the consonant tones must be somehow equal but, at the same time, different. But whatever the metaphysical nature of friendship, friendship is an essential condition of life.

Friendship gives people self-knowledge. Friendship reveals where and how one must work on oneself. But this transparency of I for itself is

attained only in the life-interaction of the loving persons. The “together” of a friendship is the source of its strength. St. Ignatius of Antioch, indicating the mysterious, miracle-working power received by Christians from life-together, wrote to the Ephesians concerning the cenobitic life: “Thus, try to gather together more closely to thank and glorify God. For when you are close together in one place, then the powers of Satan are defeated and the perdition he provokes is removed in the unity of your faith. There is nothing better than the peace in which all war ends between heavenly and earthly things.”⁷⁹⁷

This passage clearly indicates that the “together” of love must not be limited solely to abstract thought but necessarily requires palpable, concrete manifestations, including physical closeness. It is necessary not only to “love” one another but also to be close together, to attempt, as much as possible, to come closer and closer to one another. But when are friends closest to each other, if not when kissing? The very word for “kiss” in Russian (*potselui*) is close to the Russian word for “whole” (*tsel'yi*), and the Russian verb for “to kiss” (*tselovat'sia*) signifies that friends are brought to a state of wholeness (*tselostnost'*) or unity. A kiss is the spiritual unification of the persons kissing.⁷⁹⁸ Its connection with friendship, namely with *philia*, is seen from the Greek word for it, *philēma*. Moreover (as we have already mentioned), *philein*, with the addition of *tō stomati* (with the lips) or without it, means “to kiss.”

It is necessary to live a common life, it is necessary to illuminate and suffuse everyday life with closeness, even outward, bodily closeness. Christians will then acquire new, unheard-of powers. They will overcome Satan, cleansing and removing all of his impure powers. That is why St. Ignatius writes to St. Polycarp, the bishop of the Church of Smyrna and thus of the whole Church: “Labor together, try together, run together, suffer together, rest together, be awake together, as God’s stewards, guests, and servants.”⁷⁹⁹

Perhaps, having before his spiritual eyes these words of his departed Teacher, St. Polycarp of Smyrna taught the Philippians: “He who has love—*agapēn*—is far from all sin.”⁸⁰⁰

Here again, the basic idea is repeated. Love gives special powers to the loving one, and these powers overcome sin. They cleanse and remove, to cite Ignatius, the power of Satan and his perdition.

This is also affirmed by others who know the laws of spiritual life. Thus, Father Feodor, the starets of the Svir Monastery, spoke persuasively but quietly in the manner of a father before his death:

“My fathers! For the sake of the Lord, do not part from one another, for now in this time of great troubles, it is difficult to find many people with whom one can exchange a word according to one’s conscience.”⁸⁰¹

These words are extremely remarkable. For they do not tell one not to be wrathful, not to be angry with one another, or not to quarrel with one

another. No, they clearly tell of the necessity of being together, of being together outwardly, bodily, empirically, in everyday life.

And the Church considered (and considers) such a life-together to be so absolutely necessary, so essentially connected with the best in life, that even over the deceased we hear Her voice: "It is good, it is beautiful for brothers to live together." At the grave of someone dear to me, this sigh concerning friendship entered my heart. I had the thought that, even when all business with life has ended, one remembers with ardent desire the ideal of friendship, life together. There is nothing now. There is not even life itself! Nevertheless, a longing for the communion of friends remains. Does it not follow that friendship is the last word of the *properly human element of the Church*, the apex of humanity? As long as man remains man, he seeks friendship. The ideal of friendship is not innate in man, but *a priori* for him.⁸⁰² It is a constitutive element of his nature.

John Chrysostom⁸⁰³ even interprets all of Christian love as friendship. In the self-sacrifice of the Apostle Paul, in his readiness to throw himself even into Gehenna for the sake of those he loved, Chrysostom sees the "flaming love" of friendship.

"I desire," he says, "to present an example of friendship. Friends, friends in Christ, are dearer than fathers and sons." Further, he mentions the example of the first Christians of the Jerusalem community, depicted in Acts, 4:32, 35. "Friendship," Chrysostom continues, "is when one does not judge himself to be his own but to belong to his neighbor, and meanwhile considers his neighbor's property to be foreign to himself; when one protects the life of another as if it were his own, while the other pays him in the same coin!" Chrysostom considers the absence of such friendship to be the sin of mankind and the source of all troubles and even heresies. "But where, it will be asked, can one find such a friend? Nowhere! Because we do not want to be such, but if we did so want, it would be possible and even very possible. If this were in fact impossible, Christ would not have commanded it and would not have spoken so much of love. Friendship is a great thing, but no one can understand how great. No word can express it; it can only be found out through personal experience. The failure to understand this produced heresies; it makes the Greeks Greeks even today," and so on.

Communal life, the life of the parish, requires being-together, co-abiding. But this "co" refers even more to the life of friends, where concrete closeness has a special force; and here this "co" acquires an epistemological significance. This "co," understood as the "bearing of one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2), as mutual obedience, is the vital nerve of friendship and its cross. Therefore, experienced people have repeatedly insisted on this "co" over the whole course of church history.

Thus, speaking of the life of monks two by two, Thomas of Canterbury cites the folk proverb: "*Miles in obsequio famulum, clericus socium,*

monachus habet dominum,” i.e., “for a warrior a novice is a servant; for a cleric he is a comrade; for a monk, he is a master.”

Yes. And every friendship, like Christian life in general, is in this sense monasticism. Each of the friends uncomplainingly humbles himself before his life-companion, in the same manner as a servant before his master. The French proverb is fully justified here: “*Qui a compagnon, a maître* (who has a companion has a master).” This is what the obedience of friendship, the bearing of one’s Friend’s cross, consists in.

Faithfulness to a once-established friendship, the indissolubility of friendship, as strict as the indissolubility of marriage, firmness to the end, unto the “blood of the martyrs”—that is the fundamental commandment of friendship, and the whole force of friendship lies in the observance of this commandment. There are many temptations to turn away from a Friend, to remain alone or to start new relationships. But a person who has broken off one friendship will break off another, and a third, because he has replaced the way of asceticism with the desire for psychic comfort. And psychic comfort will not be achieved, cannot and should not be achieved, in any friendship. On the contrary, asceticism lends strength to a friendship. When one builds a wall, the more water one pours on the bricks, the stronger the wall will be. It is the same with friendship: the more tears one sheds because of friendship, the stronger the friendship will become.

Tears are the cement of friendship—not all tears but only those that are shed because love cannot express itself and because of the pain caused by the friend. And the more friendship there is, the more tears there will be. And the more tears there are, the more friendship there will be.

Tears in friendship are the same thing as water in a fire at an alcohol distillery: the more water one pours, the higher the flame will rise.

And it would be a mistake to think that tears come only from a deficiency of love. No, “there are seeds that sprout in our soul only under a rain of tears shed because of us. And these seeds bring forth beautiful flowers and healing fruits. . . . And I do not know if I could love anyone who would not make anyone cry. Very often, those who love the most strongly cause the most suffering, for who knows what tender and shy cruelty is usually the restless sister of love. Love seeks proofs of love everywhere, but who is not inclined to find these proofs first in the tears of the loved one? . . . Even death would not be sufficient to convince the loving one if he decides to hear out the demands of love, for the instant of death seems too brief for the intimate cruelty of love. Beyond death there is room for a sea of doubts. Those who die together do not die, perhaps, without anxiety. Here, long and slow tears are needed. Sorrow is the main food of love, and every love that is not nourished, at least a little, by pure sorrow, dies like a new-born that is fed like a grown-up. It is necessary—alas!—that love cry, and, very often, at the same moment that the

sobs are released the chains of love are forged and tempered for all of life.”⁸⁰⁴

Sooner or later the inner closeness of persons, the closest intertwining of two inner worlds, manifests itself. “Before, I loved thee as a brother . . . , But now, I do respect thee as my soul,” says one of Shakespeare’s heroes.^b Previously, the relationship was superficial, external; now it has plunged down to the mystical roots of friends. The communion of souls occurs now not in phenomena but deeper. According to the Russian proverb, a friend is not dear because he is good but good because he is dear. Every outsider seeks mine, not me, whereas a friend wants not mine but me. The Apostle writes: “I seek not yours, but you” (2 Cor 12:14). An outsider looks for the “work,” whereas a Friend looks for me “myself.” An outsider wants “yours,” receives from you, from your fullness, i.e., a part, and this part disappears in the hands like foam. Only a friend, wanting *you*, however you are, receives in you *all*, fullness, and is enriched by it. To receive from fullness is easy: it is to live on someone else’s account. And to give from fullness is not difficult. But to receive fullness itself is difficult, for it is first necessary to receive a Friend himself, and to find fullness *in him*. But a Friend cannot be accepted without our giving ourselves, but to give oneself is difficult. A superficial and peripheral gift requires a superficial and peripheral payment, whereas a profound and central gift requires a profound and central giving. Therefore, give to outsiders from your fullness, from yourself, with a generous hand; do not be a miser in what is yours. But give your meagerness, yourself, only to your Friend, secretly, but not before your Friend tells you, “I ask not for yours but for you; I love not yours but you; I cry not about yours but about you.”

When the revelation of each in each begins among friends, the whole person becomes transparent in all his fullness to the point of the friends’ being able to see what is hidden, to the point of clairvoyance.

“In every friendship that is of some duration,” says Maurice Maeterlinck, “there comes a mysterious moment when we begin to distinguish, so to speak, the precise place of our friend in relation to the unknown that surrounds him, the attitude of fate toward him. From this moment on he really belongs to us. An infallible knowledge, it appears, was born in our soul without cause the day when our eyes were opened in such a way, and we are certain that a certain event that apparently is lying in wait for a certain person will not be able to overtake him. Henceforth, a special part of the soul reigns over the friendship of even the dimmest beings. A sort of transposition of life occurs. And when we accidentally meet one of those whom we have come to know thus, and speak with him about the falling snow or about women who are passing by, there is in each of us

^b Prince Henry, in Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV*, Act 5, Scene 4.

something that greets the other, examines, questions without our knowledge, is interested in coincidences, and speaks about events that are impossible for us to understand.”⁸⁰⁵

But this interpenetration of persons is the task, not the given, in a friendship. When this interpenetration is achieved, it is in the nature of things that friendship become unbreakable and faithfulness to the person of the Friend stop being an ascesis, because it cannot be violated. In the absence of such a higher unity, faithfulness is, as the church consciousness has always considered it, something necessary not only for the preservation of friendship but even for the very life of the friends. The keeping of a friendship gives everything, while a betrayal is a betrayal not only of the friendship but even places in jeopardy the very spiritual existence of the unfaithful one, for the souls of the friends had already begun to grow together.

There is a passion that lies in wait for friendship, a passion that can instantly tear apart the most sacred of ties. This passion is rage. It is what friends must be most afraid of. One psychologist says: “Nothing so unrestrainedly destroys the effect of prohibitions as rage, because its essence is destruction and only destruction, as Moltke characterized war. This property of rage makes it an invaluable ally of any other passion. The most valuable pleasures are trampled by us with cruel joy if they attempt to restrain the explosion of our indignation. At this time it costs nothing to destroy a friendship, to reject old privileges and rights, to tear any relations and ties. We find a kind of cruel joy in destruction, and what bears the name of weakness of character is apparently reducible, in the majority of cases, to the inability to sacrifice one’s lower ‘I’ and everything that seems dear to it.”⁸⁰⁶

I would like to cite two tales taken from *vitae* that clarify the Church’s view of the necessity of remaining faithful to a friendship.

A tale entitled “Of two brothers in spirit, of the deacon Evagrius, and the priest Titus,” which was very widespread and popular in its time, recounts how the love of friends was destroyed by a fit of anger and what were the terrible consequences of this destruction. This tale is depicted, to edify the community, on the vestibule wall of the church of the Zosimos hermitage, near the Trinity-Saint-Sergius Lavra. Here it is:

There were two brothers in spirit at the Pechersk monastery, the deacon Evagrius and the priest Titus. Between them was a great and sincere love, and all were amazed by their spiritual unity and immeasurable love. The devil, who hates goodness and always roars like a lion, seeking to devour someone, created hostility and hatred between them. They did not want to see each other’s face, and kept away from each other, although the brothers implored them many times to mend their friendship. When Evagrius was in church and Titus approached him with a censer,

Evagrius fled the incense, and when he did not do so, Titus passed by without censuring him. And for a long time they remained in the darkness of sin: Titus served without asking for forgiveness, while Evagrius took communion while in a state of anger, for the enemy had armed them. It happened that Titus fell gravely ill and lay in despair. And he cried even more over his loss. He sent for the deacon with supplication to tell him: "Forgive me, brother, in the name of God, for I had toward thee an insane anger." The latter cursed him with cruel words, and the monks, seeing that Titus was dying, forcibly compelled Evagrius to take leave of his brother. When the sick man saw his brother, he fell to earth at his feet crying, and said: "Forgive me, father, and bless me." The other, pitiless and cruel, refused and said before all of them: "I do not want to have any forgiveness with him, neither in this world nor in the next." Then he escaped from the hands of the brothers and fell; they wanted to raise him but he was dead. They could not straighten his arms or close his lips; it was as if he had been dead for a long time. Meanwhile, the sick man got up a little later as if he had not been sick at all. The monks were terrified by the sudden death of one and the sudden healing of the other. And, with many tears, they buried Evagrius, his mouth and eyes open and his arms extended. They asked Titus what had happened. He confessed to the monks: "I saw angels who stepped away from me and who cried over my soul, while demons were rejoicing in my anger. And then I started to ask my brother to forgive me. When he was brought to me, I saw an implacable angel who held a fiery lance, and when he did not forgive me, the angel struck him and he fell dead. Then the angel held out his hand to me and set me on my feet." Abba Jacob said: "As a lamp lights a dark chamber, so the fear of God enters a man's heart, enlightens him, and teaches him all of God's commandments."⁸⁰⁷

In order to clarify what I call faithfulness to friendship, I will present the tale of the blessed John Moschus about two Jerusalem ascetics who were friends. Here is this fragrant flower from the artless and graciously simple *Spiritual Meadow*.⁸⁰⁸

This is what Abba John the Hermit, called the Fiery One, said: I heard the following from Abba Stephen the Moabite: Once we were in the monastery of the great cenobite St. Theodosius. There were two brothers there who vowed that they would part from each other neither in death nor in life. Even though they were the pillars of the community, one of the brothers was attacked by lust and, not having the strength to withstand the struggle, told his brother: "Let me go, brother! Because lust is

defeating me, and I aim to go into the world.” His brother began to admonish him and said: “No, brother, do not spoil your labor.” The other brother answered him: “Either go with me so that I could do the deed or let me go.” The brother, not wishing to let him go, went with him to the city. Then the brother who had yielded to the struggle entered a prostitute’s den, and the other brother, standing outside, began to sprinkle some earth on his head and to lament powerfully. When the one who had been with the prostitute came out, having done the deed, the other brother told him: “What good, my brother, did you gain from this sin? Did you not rather harm yourself? Let us return to our place.” The other told him: “I can no longer return to the desert. But you go. I’ll remain in the world.” But when, after many efforts, he nevertheless did not succeed in persuading his friend to follow him back to the desert, he too remained in the world, and both began to work to feed themselves.

It was at this time that Abraham, a splendid (*kalos*) and humble pastor who had recently founded his monastery of so-called Abrahamites and who later had become the Archbishop of Ephesus, was building his monastery, the so-called monastery of the Byzantines. Having gone away, both brothers began to work there and to receive payment. And the one fallen in lust would take the payment of both, go every day to the city, and spend it on debauchery. The other fasted every day and took great silence upon himself. When doing his work, he did not speak with anyone. The masters, every day seeing him not eating, not speaking, but always in contemplation, mentioned him and his saintly way of life to Abba Abraham. The great Abraham called the laborer into his cell and asked him, “Where are you from, brother? And what is your occupation?” He confessed to him everything, and told him: “For the sake of my brother, I bear everything, so that God, seeing my sorrow, will save my brother.” When he heard this, the divine Abraham told him: “And the Lord gave to you your brother’s soul!” As soon as Abba Abraham let the brother go, and he left the cell, there appeared before him his brother, exclaiming: “My brother, take me to the desert, so that I will be saved.” He immediately took him to a cave near the holy Jordan, and shut him in the cave, and a short while later, having advanced greatly in his spirit toward God, the friend who was shut in the cave passed away. His brother remained in the same cave in accordance with the vow he had made, so that he too would pass away there.

Here are some more features of friendship, sketched by life itself. After the death of one dear to me, I acquired his diary. Among many other of

life's difficulties, the deceased had been tormented by this tragic character of friendship, by this necessity of sacrificing one's soul for one's friend, or, more precisely, by the apparent meaninglessness of such a sacrifice. And it appears to me that there was much mutual misunderstanding. It also appears to me that the deceased did not succeed in humbling himself to the end. But to clarify my thought, to give a concrete idea of friendship, his notes are valuable material. I present several fragments, gathered almost at random, from different places in this diary, almost in their raw form:

M. is still asleep. He is resting from the matins and the liturgy. But my thought constantly returns to him and chases sleep away. M. troubles me. What do I do for him? What do I give him? He is sick—in body and soul. He is bored, his soul is empty. And I have not yet given him a single grain of content. And I know this well—I must answer for him before God. I do not even know how to care for my neighbor. For the Gospel has revoked the *metaphysical* understanding of a neighbor according to which a “neighbor,” *ho pelas*, is a relative, that is, a man bound not by visibly spatial ties but by other ties, more *ontological* ones. And the Gospel has established the geometrical understanding of a neighbor. A “neighbor, *ho pelas*,” is one who is near, *pelas*, at one's side. And the one with whom you have been thrown together, the one near whom you happen to be, is the one you should take care of. And if you have abandoned one friend, what guarantees your faithfulness to someone else? There is no reason to soar to suprastellar heights. Enough platonism! M. is my neighbor, for he is the nearest to me, in the same room with me. But Lord! Teach me what I should do to give him peace and joy, so that he would acquire Thy peace through me.

Should I pray that you feel good or that you be good? I pray for the latter, my Friend and Brother, and I suffer with your suffering.

Maikov says somewhere:

If you wish to live without struggle, without storm,
Without knowing the bitterness of life, to ripe old age,
Do not seek a friend and do not call yourself anyone's
friend.

You will taste fewer joys, but also fewer sorrows!ⁱ

Yes, but the important thing here is this “if.” In my opinion, not only is the rhythmic alternation of grief and joy with a friend infinitely more valuable than an even and peacefully flowing life

ⁱ Apollon Maikov (1821–97) was a minor poet.

in solitude, but I would not trade even continuous grief with a friend for continuous solitary joy.

There are things regarding a man about which not he himself but his friend must be concerned. But if the friend does not want to be concerned? Then, no one should be concerned. If a friend is indifferent to his own doom and that of his friend, then doom *must* come. One *must* fall, without counting on mercy or surcease. Today, it's drunkenness; tomorrow, it's something else; the day after tomorrow, it's another thing altogether; the day after that, it's something else; the day after that, it's something else again; and so on and so forth. From day to day, the soul is destroyed. From day to day, the soul is emptied. From day to day, life becomes more meaningless. And there is no hope for daylight, no hope for anything at all that is better. There is no hope for purity. Lower and lower. More and more fleshly. I pity him and do not dare stop him. One must perish with him. One must fall with him. Time passes—the hours, weeks, and months. Strength fades; health fades. Everything fades. Nothing remains. Not only is there no hope for a better future, there is complete certainty that the worst will happen. And it will go on this way: everything will become worse and worse. An emptied soul. A soul becoming earthy. The gravestone presses on the breast. And, added to this, falsehood: "You're asleep. I'll go and chat." All this is falsehood. And M. was right to say: "Don't stick your nose in." I tried. I stuck my nose in, and I'm perishing, and I can't help anyone. "I tasted a little honey, and now I'm dying." I must depart. Before, I was restrained by the thought of God. But now the chain is twice as strong, out of pity. I pity M. What will become of him? How will he get along without me? And I endure. Nevertheless, I must depart.

Lord, my God! Is that all life is? The life of an average, weak, ordinary man. Is that what life is? Lord Jesus! Can it be that this is all that life is? Lord! Teach me what to do, how to revive M., how to pull myself away from sin and torpor. I am frightened, O Lord! I am frightened for myself and for others. I am frightened for a human soul. One way or another, I must depart either into death or into a monastery. Into the desert, Lord, into the desert take me, drag me by force, if I cannot do anything with myself or with M., or with anyone. I have not done anything with myself. How can I help another? And I know that M. started sliding downhill the moment he saw that I couldn't handle myself. Perhaps, this would have happened even without me, but it would have happened later. But regardless of how I try to reinterpret the reality, I, and I alone, am to blame.

They say: “this is trivial.” Yes, this is trivial. That is trivial. Let it be so. But, in this case, it is natural to pose the question: What is positive, what is good? What is there that is not trivial? Nothing, nothing, nothing! The problem is precisely that all of life is rubbish, that in all of life there is nothing good. Better a life full of sin with the consciousness that it is full of sin than a pit and emptiness, than this indifference to holiness and sin, God and the devil, than this “stony absence of feeling.”

M. is clearly avoiding serious conversation, either about objective things or about things that concern us personally. Essential problems need to be solved. He delays, does not want to decide, but if you yourself attempt to reach some decision, he becomes angry and irritated. One has reached the dead point. He shows tenderness only when you assent to his despair, and to your own despair. But only make a peep against this, and he throws a fit or pouts for days on end. And I, I also, pout, because I do not know what I am to do, how I am to be. Lord! Lord! Help my ineptitude! My sin! My ignorance! My despair and M.’s despair! He does not want to think about anyone or anything, although by nature he is not at all an egotist. If I say “People are sleeping in that room” [in other words, don’t go in], he’ll say: “Well, so what? What affair is it of mine?” Well, let it be. It is as if I am complaining about someone. One must pray more. That’s what.

Sexual abstinence, if it is not accompanied by an excited state, is not harmful physiologically or, in any case, not especially harmful. And in the occult and mystical respect, it even serves to develop new capabilities. But abstinence connected with a state of excitedness, i.e., with the imagining that one can transcend oneself through sex, is harmful, and the more vivid is the imagining, the more harmful such abstinence will be. The soul becomes foul and rots, in the same way that the body perishes. Perhaps the chief harm is from a constant lack of satisfaction. Should one not say the same thing about the transcending of oneself through the communion of souls—in friendship? For marriage is “two in one flesh,” while friendship is two in one soul. Marriage is unity of flesh, *homosarchia*, while friendship is unity of souls, *homopsuchia*. Solitude, if it does not have as its inseparable companion the constant thought of a friend, is not harmful and is even useful in some respects, e.g., in the ascesis of silence. But the imagining of friendship in solitude has a harmful effect, a particular harm for a person. A particular person is depleted and dies when, desiring and thinking of friendship, he is compelled to spend a lot of time in company, to socialize without real friendship, to imagine that he really is transcending himself when he is

not really transcending himself, and to act as if this were a real self-transcending. Not obtaining spiritual satisfaction but eternally running after it and near it, one teases oneself with the dream of one's imagination, and one's spiritual powers are spent on this dream.

Is this not the case with me? But even if it is the case, I cannot, do not dare, must not leave M. Let there be nothing, and let a spiritual (and perhaps not only a spiritual) grave await me! But I will not leave him. If it is necessary to perish, then we shall perish together. We could not live together; so let us perish together.

With this let us end the excerpts from the diary.

FRIENDSHIP gives the loftiest joy but it also demands the strictest asceticism. Every day, hour, and minute, ruining my soul with sorrow for the sake of my Friend, in joy I acquire this soul restored. Just as *agapē* toward a person gives birth to *philia* toward him, so here too, in friendship, sovereign *agapē* is embodied in *philia* as in a living medium. Divine, agapic love transubstantiates philic love, and on this summit of human feeling, like clouds brushing against the twin-peaked Ararat, the heavenly swirls above the earthly: "Greater love (*agapēn*) hath no man than this, that a man lay down his soul for his friends" (*huper tōn philōn autou*) (John 15:13). The greatest agapic love is realizable only in relation to *friends*, not in relation to all people, not "in general." The greatest agapic love consists in the laying down of one's soul for one's friends. But it would be extremely simplistic to interpret this to mean that one dies for them. Dying for friends is only the final (not the most difficult) step on the ladder of friendship. But before dying for one's friends, one must be their friend, and this is achieved by long and difficult asceticism. One of Ibsen's heroes says: "One can die for the life's task of another but one cannot live for the life's task of another." But the essence of friendship lies precisely in the losing of one's soul for the sake of one's friend. This is the sacrifice of one's entire organization, one's freedom and calling. He who wishes to save his soul must lay down all of it for his friends, and his soul will not live again if it does not die.

Friendship is necessary for an ascetic life, but it cannot be realized by human powers and requires assistance. And so, how can one characterize, psychologically and mystically, the natural striving toward unity of friendship? By means of what does friendship acquire grace-giving assistance and by what is the decision taken reinforced for the consciousness? What bond binds friendship so that it stops being subjective wanting and becomes objective will? For, in order always to overcome one's selfhood, in order to mend a thousand times the connecting fibers of friendship,

inevitably torn as a result of the sin of the friends and external influences, there has to be some memento, something concrete with which the inner decision to bear everything, to the end, would be associated. Also needed is a mysterious current of energy which constantly renews the first, dazzling time of friendship.

Traditionally, there have been two such reinforcements of friendship: (1) the “natural sacrament” (may the reader forgive this inappropriate combination of words) of the *pledging of brotherhood*; and (2) the grace-giving office of *adelphopoiesis*, *akolouthia eis adelphopoiesin* or *eis adelphopoia*, which grew out of this “sacrament” as from a fruitful natural soil. Here I will analyze neither the one nor the other, for such an analysis would take us far from the domain of theosophy and *personal* religious experiences into ethnology and liturgics.⁸⁰⁹ Let me only note that the pledging of brotherhood consists, in essence, of a real unification through an exchange of blood and names (and sometimes even an exchange of shirts, clothes, and weapons), or through co-partaking of sacred food, a vow of faithfulness, and a kiss. (Not all these elements have to be present at the same time in the given concrete form of the pledging.) The pledging of brotherhood clearly corresponds to a natural religious consciousness. On the other hand, in the office of *adelphopoiesis*, the exchange of blood and co-partaking of sacred food are replaced by Holy Communion, by the co-partaking of the Blood of Christ, while the exchange of names is replaced by the exchange of crosses, which corresponds to the exchange of Christian names. The half-ecclesiastical, half-popular rite of *adelphopoiesis* is accomplished through an exchange of crosses, a vow of brotherly love and faithfulness before an icon in church, and by the brothers’ alternately holding a burning candle during the Cherubic Hymn.

There are different versions of this rite, but its chief elements are as follows: (1) the brothers to be are positioned in the church before the lectern, upon which rest the Cross and the Gospel; the older of the two stands to the right while the younger stands to the left; (2) prayers and litanies are said that ask that the two be united in love and that remind them of examples of friendship from church history; (3) the two are tied with one belt, their hands are placed on the Gospel, and a burning candle is given to each of them; (4) the Apostle (1 Cor 12:27 to 13:8) and the Gospel (John 17:18–26) are read; (5) more prayers and litanies like those indicated in 2 are read; (6) *Our Father* is read; (7) the brothers to be partake of the presanctified gifts from a common cup; (8) they are led around the lectern while they hold hands, the following troparion being sung: “Lord, watch from heaven and see”; (9) they exchange kisses; and (10) the following is sung: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Ps. 133:1).

Sometimes the exchange of crosses is added to this. But it is possible that this exchange had not become an essential part of the rite because the brothers to be could exchange crosses even before the rite. Along with the communion together, this exchange is the most important ideational element of the rite, first as a sign that the brothers will bear each other's cross and, second, as a rite that gives to each of the "named brothers" a memento of self-renunciation and faithfulness to his friend.

What is adelphopoiesis? The profound thinker N. F. Fyodorovⁱ saw it as a kind of liturgy. "The rite of adelphopoiesis," he says, "is wholly like a liturgy. It ends with the partaking of the presanctified gifts. Such features of this rite as the engirdling of the participants in the union with one belt, the circling of the lectern during the troparion 'Watch from heaven and see, and visit Thy vine, and, approve it, for Thy hand has planted it' are not used in the liturgy. Is this not because the church walls serve, so to speak, as a belt linking all those present, while the church processions signify unifications in the course of life and in the common work?"⁸¹⁰ These considerations are very remarkable. But, in connection with them, Fyodorov thinks that the rite of adelphopoiesis was separated from the liturgy as the "essence of the liturgy of the catechumens" precisely when church life became secularized and when the union of all men began to be replaced by particular unions."⁸¹¹ It is very permissible to doubt the correctness of such a diminution of this rite. What is precisely of essence here is that church life is antinomic, that is, that it does not consist in a rational formula. And, in the aspect considered, church life can be reduced neither to unions that are only particular nor wholly to a union that is only general. The fact is that both the one and the other, both the general and the particular, irreducible to each other, are equally necessary in church life, and are united in the process of life. Thus, for example, marriage is also a type of liturgy, an analogue of the communal liturgy and not a falling away from it, for one cannot conceive that first there was a "group marriage," a "general" wedding ceremony, and that only subsequently, with secularization of Church life, did monogamy begin. The same thing holds

ⁱ Nikolai Fyodorov (1828–1903) was a highly original thinker in whom, as V. V. Zenkovsky characterizes it, "genuine Christian inspirations are unexpectedly combined with motifs of naturalism and an 'enlightenment' faith in the power of science and the creative potentialities of man" (*A History of Russian Philosophy*, trans. George L. Kline [New York and London, 1953], Vol. 2, p. 588). Fyodorov's principal idea, as expounded in his main work, *The Philosophy of the Common Task*, was that man should aid God in the work of resurrection by developing technological means to raise from the dead all the people who have ever died. Fyodorov hated death, and felt that the greatest desire of men should be to bring back those whom they had loved and lost. Thus, men should develop and implement whatever means necessary to bring back the dead. It is this sort of "active Christianity" that Fyodorov sees to be the "common task" of humanity, a task whose commencement will already begin to overcome the "unbrotherly" man-is-a-wolf-to-man relationship that has dominated mankind throughout history. With the abolition of death, the ultimate goal is the transfiguration of mankind, and, indeed, of the entire universe.

for adelphopoiesis. Thus, if we follow Fyodorov's thinking to its natural conclusion, it turns out that marriage too, along with other sacraments and rites, must be considered a separation from the liturgy, a product of the corruption of general church life. An obvious error!

However, Fyodorov's idea, even though it is expressed incorrectly, is in itself correct. Of course, Fyodorov is right: In the Church there cannot be anything that is not pan-ecclesial, just as there cannot be anything that is not personal. In the Church, there is no "*Privatsache*," just as there is nothing in it of impersonal "law." Every phenomenon of church life is pan-ecclesial in its meaning, but it has a center, a point of special application, where it is not only stronger but even qualitatively *wholly* other than in other places. Take marriage as an example.

The marriage of a member of the Church is, of course, the business of the whole universal Church—not in the sense that when one of the members marries all of the other members marry his wife, but in the sense that, for everyone, this event has a certain spiritual significance and is not something indifferent. For each member, the wife of a brother becomes not just anyone but precisely the wife of the brother. Moreover, for one member she becomes simply a wife, but for the other members she becomes the wife of their brother. This is a distinction not only in degree but also in quality, even though both the one and the other have ecclesial significance. Thus, marriage embraces the husband and wife most proximally and in a quite special manner ("we are wed"), but it embraces the other members of the Church in a wholly other manner ("they are wed"). The same thing must be said about the liturgy. The liturgy embraces the members of a parish community in a quite special manner ("we pray," "we take communion"), but it embraces all other members of the church in a wholly other manner ("they pray," "they take communion"). In the same way, a certain phenomenon can embrace several communities: an eparchy or several eparchies, and so on. But church life is always never merely "in general" nor merely "why should we concern ourselves with others?" It is never merely a "social phenomenon" nor merely a "*Privatsache*." It is always universal and general in its significance and always personal and concrete in its application and appearance.

All we have said above holds also for adelphopoiesis. Just as agapic love must be accompanied by philic love, which is irreducible to but inseparable from agapic love, so liturgical offices of the agapic and philic unions, which are irreducible to each other, must coexist. And it is clear that, just as the two forms of love are analogues of each other, so the corresponding rites of the communal liturgy and of adelphopoiesis are also analogues. But being analogues, i.e., being based on a single pattern, they are not at all derivable from each other. This can be compared with the structure of an organism. A hand is formed on the same pattern as a foot; the two are analogues; and the upper part of the body is an analogue

of the lower part. Nevertheless, the feet are just as necessary as the hands, and the lower part of the body is just as necessary as the upper part. They are not only not replaceable by each other, but one cannot function normally without the other. The general principle of organization is realized in particulars, and the particulars are permeated by the principle of unity. But a concrete diversity and a unifying pattern of organization are also needed. It is this way in Church life too: the general principle, love, lives not only agapically but also philically, and creates a form for itself—not only the communal liturgy but also the adelphopoiesis of friends.

But here the question naturally arises, What power assures the unmergeability of heterogeneous phenomena? What maintains the equilibrium of the principle of the particular and the principle of the general? What spiritual activity, without preventing particular philic phenomena from being pan-ecclesial, at the same time protects their particularity? It is unquestionable that there must be such an activity; otherwise, the Church would not have spiritual equilibrium. This is clearly seen in connection with the following examples: Since the wife of a brother must, for every man, be the wife of a brother, but only the wife of this particular brother and not the wife of every man, there must be some kind of spiritual activity that places her in a wholly particular relation to her husband and continuously assures the uniqueness of this relation.

In the same way, since, for each member of the Church, the friend of a brother *must* be the friend of a brother, but only the friend of this particular brother, not the friend of everyone, there must necessarily be a force that orders and maintains the individuality of the union of friends. Together with a uniting force that takes one outside individual existence, there must be an isolating force, which sets a limit to diffuseness and impersonality. Together with a centrifugal force, there must be a centripetal one. This force is *jealousy*, and its function is to isolate, separate, delimit, differentiate. If this force did not exist, there would be no concrete church life with its specific order. Instead, we would have protestant, anarchistic, communistic, Tolstoyan, etc. mixing of all with all. We would have total formlessness and chaos. The force of jealousy is alive in both friendship and marriage, in an eparchy as well as in a local parish or a monastery. It is alive everywhere.⁸¹² Everywhere it is necessary to have definiteness of connections and constancy of unions, be it with a friend, a wife, a *starets*, a pastor, a bishop, a metropolitan, or a patriarch. In other words, everywhere there must be not only love but also jealousy. There must be jealousy toward friend, wife, congregation, brothers, eparchy, or local church. We must now get a deeper insight into this concept, which is so important but usually so little explored.