

- **Jesus and Dostoevsky**
- ***Jésus et Dostoïevski***
- ***Jesus und Dostojewski***

Loránt Hegedüs, Bishop of the Reformed Church of Hungary

SUMMARY

Jesus is the redeemer of Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky is a XXlst century witness of Jesus, coming forth from the genius of his prophetic vision in the XIXth century and through the XXth. The word 'and' in their association signifies the relation between Master and disciple: the encounter of the God-man who for man's salvation descends to hell and is later glorified, and of the man who in order to find God, goes through hell itself. The believing Dostoevsky is completely accepted and purified by Jesus.

What the theologian sees in Dostoevsky's work of art, is that it represents the perspective of the XXlst century faith in Christ. We discuss six aspects of this faith.

1. The understanding of man integrated into religion is above all Dostoevsky's perspective of faith in Christ. With no other author do we feel the same as with him, when with every scene he penetrates deeper and deeper into his characters' soul, who in turn do not act in an everyday fashion, but truly behave and act in accordance with deep psychology. In the XXlst century nobody could believe who would not be aware of the subconscious, whose faith would only be superficial, and would not involve the realm of deep psychology. The point of view of deep psychology transfers into the point of view of deep theology in the works of Dostoevsky. In 'Crime and Punishment' Sonja does not see Raskolnykov as everybody else would see him, nor as he would see himself; Sonja sees Raskolnykov in the same way as God looks upon her. The only reason that she can forgive is because she was forgiven. The reason why she can practise mercy, is that she herself lives in grace. The creative understanding of man becomes a creative transforming knowledge. This is the resurrection, the beginning of eternal life. Without this ultimate understanding of man, man's destiny is spiritual, moral and physical death. With our understanding of man integrated

into religion and faith, it is the resurrection of Lazarus as we get this from Crime and Punishment.

2. The Christ-like understanding of the God-man is in the focus of Dostoevsky's lifework. In it Christ is always present as an original image of human existence. The suffering Redeemer truly redeems the world and only he does so, instead of all the conquering redeemers, who by the weight of their own greatness, crush the world to death.

3. The knowledge of God which prevails over radical denial is the third great unit. The knowledge of God of the XXlst century should be such that endures the Kirilovian annihilation of God, the Schatowian God-radicalisation, Ivan Karamazov's negative theodicy and the atheism for Christ of Kirilov. In this knowledge Satan reveals himself.

4. Our next point is the deep realistic knowledge of Satan. Satan appears to Ivan Karamazov and declares three stages to him: first, that he does not exist; second, that he himself is Ivan Karamazov, the man; and third, he declares that he is the devil. So does lead Satan to hell.

5. But Christ overcomes Satan, and he gives us the spiritual-scientific world-knowledge. We can know not only scientific facts, but also a spiritual-scientific world, – through symbols. While the symbols of the revelation are kept alive (Trinity, the cross, the bread and wine of the Holy Communion), they urge us to speak the unspeakable and to join in some positive common vibrations with the Infinite. – Culture will be kept alive and positive, but without these symbols it becomes an empty civilization.

6. Just therefore the decisive and final need in our era is an urgent demand for conversion and the promise of resurrection as we can see it in the examples of Raskolnykov, Aljosa Karamazov and Prince Myskin. They all, and the whole lifework of Dostoevsky, do proclaim the message: you must change your life!

RÉSUMÉ

Jésus est le sauveur de Dostoïevski. Dostoïevski est un témoin de Jésus du 21^e siècle, engendré par le génie de sa vision prophétique au 19^e siècle et qui traverse le 20^e. La conjonction «et» dans le titre,

entre Jésus et Dostoïevski, signifie la relation entre Maître et disciple: la rencontre entre le Dieu-homme qui est descendu en enfer pour le salut de l'humanité, et qui, ensuite, a été glorifié, et l'homme qui, pour trouver Dieu, traverse l'enfer lui-même. Le

croisant Dostoïevski est entièrement accepté et purifié par Jésus.

Ce que le théologien voit dans l'oeuvre et l'art de Dostoïevski, c'est qu'ils représentent l'optique de la foi en Jésus-Christ au 21^e siècle. Voici six aspects de cette foi.

1. L'optique de la foi en Jésus-Christ selon Dostoïevski se définit avant tout par l'intégration de la vision de l'homme dans la religion. Aucun autre auteur ne communique quelque chose de semblable, quand, à chaque scène, il pénètre plus profondément dans l'âme de ses personnages, qui, à leur tour, n'agissent pas à la façon de tous les jours, mais se conduisent et agissent en accord avec la psychologie des profondeurs. Au 21^e siècle, personne ne pourra croire s'il n'est pas conscient du subconscient, si sa foi reste en surface et ne provoque pas de choc dans le domaine de la psychologie des profondeurs. La psychologie des profondeurs se transforme en théologie des profondeurs dans les oeuvres de Dostoïevski. Dans *Crime et châtiment*, Sonia ne voit pas Raskolnikov comme tout le monde le verrait, ni comme il se verrait lui-même; Sonia voit Raskolnikov de la même manière que Dieu la regarde, elle. La seule raison qui lui permette de pardonner, c'est qu'elle a été pardonnée elle-même. La raison pour laquelle elle peut exercer la miséricorde est qu'elle vit, elle-même, dans la grâce. La compréhension créative de l'homme devient une connaissance qui transforme et qui crée. C'est la résurrection, le début de la vie éternelle. Sans cette compréhension ultime, la destinée de l'homme est la mort spirituelle, morale et physique. Avec notre compréhension de l'homme intégrée dans la religion et la foi, c'est la résurrection de Lazare, comme nous le découvrons dans *Crime et châtiment*.

2. Comprendre le Dieu-homme de façon christique est au centre de toute l'oeuvre de

Dostoïevski. Le Christ y est toujours présent comme l'image originelle de l'existence humaine. Le rédempteur souffrant, et lui seul, sauve vraiment le monde, alors que tous les rédempteurs-conquérants, sous le poids de leur grandeur, écrasent et perdent le monde.

3. La troisième grande partie souligne la connaissance de Dieu qui surmonte la négation radicale. La connaissance de Dieu au 21^e siècle devrait être telle qu'elle supporte l'anéantissement kirilovien de Dieu, la radicalisation divine selon Chatov, la théodicée négative d'Ivan Karamazov, ainsi que l'athéisme pour le Christ de Kirilov. Satan se révèle dans une telle connaissance.

4. Le point suivant concerne la connaissance, profonde et réaliste, de Satan. Satan apparaît à Ivan Karamazov et lui fait trois déclarations: d'abord, qu'il n'existe pas; ensuite, qu'il est lui-même l'homme Ivan Karamazov; enfin, qu'il est le diable. C'est ainsi que Satan mène en enfer.

5. Mais le Christ est vainqueur de Satan et il nous donne la connaissance scientifico-spirituelle du monde. Nous pouvons connaître non seulement des faits scientifiques mais aussi un monde spirituel-scientifique, par le moyen de symboles. Tant que les symboles de la révélation restent vivants (la Trinité, la croix, le pain et le vin de la Cène) — ils nous poussent à exprimer l'inexprimable et à vibrer positivement avec l'Infini ensemble — la culture restera vivante et positive. Mais, sans ces symboles, elle devient une civilisation vide.

6. C'est pourquoi le besoin ultime et déterminant de notre époque, c'est l'appel pressant à la conversion, et la promesse de la résurrection — perceptible dans les exemples de Raskolnikov, Aliocha Karamazov et le prince Michkine. Tous, et toute l'oeuvre de Dostoïevski, proclament le message: vous devez changer de vie.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Jesus ist der Erlöser Dostojewskis. Dostojewski ist ein Zeuge des einundzwanzigsten Jahrhunderts für Jesus, der mit der Gabe seiner prophetischen Vision durch das 20. Jh. in das 21. Jh. blickt. Das Wörtchen 'und' im Titel kennzeichnet die Beziehung zwischen Meister und Jünger: die Begegnung zwischen dem Gott-Menschen, der um der Seligkeit des Menschen willen zur Hölle niederfuhr und später verherrlicht wurde und dem Mann, der durch die Hölle ging, um Gott zu finden. Der glaubende Dostojewski ist durch Jesus völlig angenommen und gereinigt.

Für den Theologen ist Dostojewskis Werk deshalb von Bedeutung, weil es die Perspektive des Glaubens an Christus im 21. Jh. repräsentiert. Wir diskutieren sechs Aspekte dieses Glaubens.

1. Das Verständnis des Menschen, der in die Religion hineingenommen ist, übersteigt bei Dostojewski die Sicht des Glaubens an Christus. Mit keinem anderen Autor als Dostojewski fühlen wir so mit, wenn er in jeder Szene tiefer und tiefer in die Seele seiner Figur eindringt, die nicht einfach alltäglich handelt, sondern tatsächlich in Übereinstimmung mit der Tiefenpsychologie. Niemand könnte im 21. Jh. glauben, der nicht auch um das Unterbewußtsein wüßte; sein Glaube bliebe oberflächlich und brächte nicht einen Schock im Bereich der Tiefenpsychologie mit sich. Die Sichtweise der Tiefenpsychologie führt im Werk Dostojewskis zu einer 'Tiefentheologie'. Sonja sieht in 'Schuld und Sühne' Raskolnikov nicht wie jeder andere ihn sieht, noch wie er sich selbst erlebt. Sonja sieht Raskolnikov

vielmehr genauso, wie Gott sie ansieht. Ihr ist bereits vergeben und das ist der einzige Grund, warum auch sie zu vergeben in der Lage ist. Sie kann Barmherzigkeit üben, weil sie selbst darin lebt. Das geschöpfliche Verstehen des Menschen wird zu einem kreativ verändernden Wissen. Dies ist die Auferstehung, der Beginn ewigen Lebens. Ohne dieses letzte Verständnis des Menschen wäre das menschliche Schicksal der geistliche, moralische und psychologische Tod. Für unser Verständnis des Menschen, das in Religion und Glauben eingebettet ist, bedeutet dies die Auferstehung des Lazarus wie sie uns in 'Schuld und Sühne' begegnet.

2. Das christusgemäße Verstehen des Gott-Menschen steht im Zentrum des Lebenswerkes Dostojewskis. Christus begegnet stets als das eigentliche Bild menschlicher Existenz. Der leidende Erlöser, und nur er, erlöst die Welt wirklich, und dies im Gegensatz zu allen heraufdrängenden Erlösern, die durch das Gewicht ihrer eigenen Größe die Welt zu Tode zertrümmern.

3. Die Gotteserkenntnis, die die Oberhand über die radikale Gottesverneinung gewinnt, bildet die dritte große Einheit. Die Gotteserkenntnis des 21. Jh. sollte die Kirilovsche Gottesvernichtung, die Schatowiansche Gottesradikalisierung, Ivan Karamazows negative Theodizee und Kirilows Atheismus aushalten können. In solcher Erkenntnis

offenbart sich der Satan selbst.

4. Der nächste Punkt ist die tiefe reale Kenntnis des Satans. Der Satan erscheint Ivan Karamazow und behauptet drei Dinge: Erstens, daß er nicht existiere. Zweitens, daß er selbst Ivan Karamazow, der Mensch, sei. Drittens, daß er der Teufel sei. So führt der Satan in die Hölle.

5. Christus überwindet den Satan und er gibt uns eine geistlich durchdrungene wissenschaftliche Welt-Erkenntnis. Wir können nicht nur wissenschaftliche Fakten kennen, sondern auch eine aufgrund von Symbolen geistlich durchdrungene wissenschaftliche Welt. Solange die Symbole der Offenbarung lebendig erhalten werden (die Trinität, das Kreuz, Brot und Wein im Heiligen Abendmahl), drängen sie uns, das Unsagbare auszusprechen. Die Kultur wird lebendig erhalten werden und positiv sein, jedoch ohne diese Symbole zu einer leeren Zivilisation werden.

6. Gerade deshalb ist die entschiedene Notwendigkeit unserer Zeit der dringende Ruf zur Umkehr und die Verheißung der Auferstehung, wie es an den Beispielen Raskolnikovs, Aljossa Karamazows und des Prinzen Myskin zu sehen ist. Sie alle, wie auch das gesamte Lebenswerk Dostojewskis, verkünden die eine Botschaft: Du mußt dein Leben ändern!

We have to limit ourselves in the length of this paper, since the gravity, profoundness of Dostoevsky's life-work threatens to become too detailed, and thus the essence, the most vital part of it, may evade our attention. Therefore the presentation of 'Dostoevskian' faith projected into the twenty-first century is rather an endeavour to outline a co-ordination system, in which everybody who would like to do so – while reading Dostoevsky's work – may substitute the perception of his own belief, guided by visions of Dostoevsky's faith, who again, we believe, was led by a biblical Jesus.

We will begin our lecture with the definition of the words appearing in the title 'Jesus and Dostoevsky'.

Jesus is the redeemer of Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky is a twenty-first-century witness of Jesus, coming from the genius of his prophetic vision in the nineteenth century and through the twentieth.

The word 'and' in their association signifies the relation between the Master and

disciple: the encounter of the God-man who for man's salvation descends to hell and is later glorified, and of the man who in order to find God is going through hell itself. The believing Dostoevsky is completely accepted and purified by Jesus. He proclaims Jesus with his whole life's work – but not with his whole life! He was not 'Christ's faithful apostle' in the true sense, like the apostle Paul, but he was a genius, if a fiction-writing prophet, who in lifestyle was at once slave and sovereign of this talent; flagbearer of his work, but also the victim of it!

He was born in 1821 in Moscow, the son of a well-to-do nobleman, although he did not inherit a penny, though he would have needed it badly, since his entire life became a huge battle with poverty. Several times he had to escape from his creditors. In all probability he was an epileptic with psycho-neurotic ethiology. He was afflicted by this *morbis sanctus* when his hopelessly alcoholic father was killed for his cruelty by one of his serfs. That is when

Dostoevsky got his first seizure. Most of his life is dominated by the entanglements of his outside and inside world and its tensions, so it was in the midst of this dramatic course of his life that he would truly become the world's greatest dramatic writer and novelist. This saying justly applied to him, 'Life itself is the greatest novelist!' Life produces the great works of his life. Real-life events form the root of all of Dostoevsky's novels. One is more fantastic than the other! Our writer – in his youth – gets involved in a political movement, and he is sentenced to death; he is taken to the place of execution, but at the last moment his life is spared by the grace of the 'Almighty Czar'! His sentence is changed to hard labour in Siberia, where he spends four years. Later on he serves two years in the military. On his return from Siberia, he releases his Notes entitled, *The House of the Dead*, which brings him fame and prestige. A literary gazette published together with his brother establishes him as a public figure. On the other hand, his marriage to his sick and unfaithful wife, Marja Dmitrijevna, whom he brought back from Siberia, is very unhappy: it is the unfortunate mixture of love and hatred which is aggravated even more by the sneaky, almost unbearable child of her first marriage, who is siding constantly with her mother. Meanwhile his public life became more and more turbulent; nihilists, revolutionists, slavophiles and westerners spread their ideas. The Czar was forced to give in on the issue of the liberation of serfs. To set an example, members of universities, colleges, institutes of higher education were imprisoned, but later on some of them, with less dangerous ideas, were released to avoid making them heroes, martyrs for the opposition. By this time the disillusioned Dostoevsky already feared anarchy, distrusted the revolution and nourished himself with a strong mysticism towards his beloved Russia. His mysticism grew deeper from his Western European trip, when he was forty years old. But he was homesick even in Paris, London, Geneva or Florence, yearning, from that world of artificial culture, money, attitude of success at any price, for the

ancient, unadulterated resources of Russia, whence, according to his belief, the world's true renewal would come.

'Winter Notes' is the title of the extremely sarcastic account of his Western trip. Yet they interpreted his periodical in such a way that it brought him political turmoil again. A year later he ventures abroad again, he travels West and this time with a student, named Polina Szuszlova, who nurtures nihilistic ideas. This trip was actually an escape from his unhappy marriage to the intoxication of love, but soon he is unhappy again, since the twenty-year-old girl leaves him in Paris. From now on our writer becomes a passionate, impulsive gambler; in roulette, three times in a row he wins 10,400 francs within minutes; he gets up and leaves, but he returns again only to lose everything, and more! Polina in the meantime returns to the unhappy writer, but at that time he is interested only in gambling; he gambles away his own watch, even the girl's jewels, and all these end up in the pawnshop. They are forced to return home on borrowed money. He is bitterly disillusioned and writes the 'Notes from the Mouse-Hole'. Meanwhile he falls in love again, this time with the admiral's daughter, Anna Korum-Krukovskaja, but she does not return his affection. Her younger sister Sonja, on the other hand, falls in love with him, but he does not even notice it, in spite of her playing for him the *Pathétique* sonata on the piano, and in spite of the fact that she later becomes the world's first woman mathematics professor in Stockholm.

This does not help Dostoevsky, although his whole life could have taken a different turn. So, he assumes his deceased brother's debts, accepts the care of his sister-in-law and her four children, and driving himself hard for work and money, avoids censure, and struggles with adversaries. At the time he wrote to one of his friends, 'I would gladly go back to prison, if I could leave my debts behind. All the reserves of my strength are gone, I am alone, completely alone!' During these difficult times he starts to write his famous book *Crime and Punishment*. Parts of the book are published and they earn him recognition.

He receives a new contract to write another book, with a very strict deadline requirement, that if he were late only by one single day in delivering it, he would not receive an honorarium. In spite of this, he travels abroad to see Polina, where he gambles away on the roulette the whole down-payment of the book. He has to go home, since there is only one month till the deadline of the delivery of the promised book. They get a stenographer for him, a twenty-year-old timid little girl, Anna, and with her help – within twenty-five days – he presents the final product, *The Gambler*; thus he receives the money for it, but not only the money and the appreciation, but he also wins Anna Grigorjevna, who is twenty-four years younger than he, and who later becomes a fabulous, ideal wife to him. From this time on she would be not only his secretary, but a good manager to his household, his finances, and publishing endeavours. From now on everything is in order, Anna takes care of his affairs splendidly. Anna survives her husband by forty years, writes a two-volume book about him, establishes and manages a Dostoevsky museum remembering him until her death and constantly reminding the public of her husband, who ‘understood everything and forgave everything’.

Without the story of his life we cannot understand the meaning of his novels and their message. In the true sense Dostoevsky’s life is a God-seeking life going through hell, and by the grace of God, a newly found life. He writes with his life and lives in his writings. It would be foolish to compare his life with his writings, and then blame him for not putting into practice the highest ideals he proclaimed, for the reason he spent his earthly life in anguish and in hell was so that later he could live his even more real and genuine life in his works, of which we may really say, ‘He created a new world from nothing’. He not only engraves, photographs, reflects reality, but he recreates it with his artistic and faithful inspiration. He truly lives in the world of literary creation, in the beginning and after-life of his works, where the depths are revealed in the deepest perfec-

tion, but the heights are pointed out with great authenticity too. The greatest novelist is the greatest in integrating in the entirety of his life’s work these authentic aspects of spiritual life whether personal or world-wide in scope. What he shows the entire race is nothing else but the perspective of a twenty-first-century faith in Christ.

Spengler considers Dostoevsky as somebody who stands at the very beginning of a so far unmeasurable new cultural circle. George Lukács leaves him out of his theory of novels, since with him a new literary species begins. Antal Szerb observes that Tolstoy still belongs to the literary order, but Dostoevsky is completely distinct from it.

What the theologian sees in Dostoevsky’s work of art is that it represents the perspective of a twenty-first-century faith in Christ, the aspects of which are:

1. The understanding of humanity integrated into religion;
2. The knowledge of the Christ-like God-man;
3. A knowledge of God prevailing over radical denial;
4. The deep-realistic knowledge of Satan;
5. The spiritual-scientific world-knowledge;
6. An urgent demand for conversion and promise of the resurrection.

THE UNDERSTANDING OF HUMANITY INTEGRATED INTO RELIGION

This understanding is above all Dostoevsky’s perspective of faith in Christ, since the human Dostoevsky starts with the understanding of man and goes progressively deeper into it through his entire life with an unbelievable intensity. With no other author do we feel the same as with him, when with every scene he penetrates deeper and deeper into his characters’ soul, who in turn do not act in everyday fashion, but truly behave and act according to deep-psychology.

Dostoevsky is accused of pathological irrationalism and it was said – following the

action of his novels, seeing their characters, listening to their dialogue – that such a thing does not exist in reality, moreover, it is impossible! But penetrating deeper into it, everybody can see: that on the basis of deep-realism, deep-psychology, all of us would speak this way, if we had the courage to do so, and if the barriers, the conventions, the gifts of the general grace of God and certain norms of humanity did not prevent us from doing so. His characters behave themselves authentically from the point of view of deep-psychology and we raise the question: is there a greater discovery in the twentieth century than to turn deep-psychology into psychology, the subconscious into the conscious? In the twenty-first century nobody could believe who is not aware of the subconscious, whose faith is only superficial, and does not involve a shock in the realm of deep-psychology.

Even Shakespeare did not have such an understanding of man, neither are the formalities of dramatics as suitable to reveal the soul as is the unlimited perspective of the novel. 'To find the man in the man with complete realism is entirely a Russian trait, and in this sense, I thoroughly belong to the people, because my views come from the depths of the Christian spirit of the people, although I am unknown by the Russian people of this day – but I will become known by them in the future.... They call me psychologist, but this is not true. I am only a realist in a higher sense, *i.e.* I reveal all the depths of the human soul', Dostoevsky wrote at the beginning of his career.

Dostoevsky's soul-searching and representation of man is not entirely motivated in the early beginning by his Christianity, moreover, it is not generally religious. Descending deep into the human soul, he insists that despite all of a man's superficial protest, the real issue for him is the question of religion. 'Man's utmost goal in life is to find his personal relationship to Infinity.' We may think that we are not interested in what we will do an infinite number of days from now and we are interested only in what we are going to do tomorrow. It is not our concern how the

face of the earth will look in the future; our interest lies only in peace and stability in our days. Yet there are unlimited varieties in what can happen to us even in one single day. There are unlimited possibilities in the mental reactions inside of one single person, and one event. And this, of course, means that we have to accept these unlimited possibilities with an outlook for a positive infinity, trying to solve them, or endure them if there is no solution in sight. If I have a negative view of infinity, about the absolute beginning and end, and about the infinite possibilities of the present, if I say that my birth was accidental, that life continues to be forced upon me, that I die because of my weakness, and the whole world is only an accidental wound on the bosom of nothing – as Büchner said in the *Death of Danton* – then it is evident that I have a nihilistic view, full of doubts and despair about the beginning and the end, and about events and attitudes of the here and now. If I have a positive attitude towards the infinite beginning, future and end, towards the infinite varieties of events and attitudes, then it is clear that whatever happens I will say, 'Everything that God does is good'. When Handel lost his eyesight he sat down at his organ and started to play, 'Everything that happened is good!' This means that Handel had a positive view in relation to infinity, and our view of infinity will definitely determine our inner attitudes and our modes of action day by day, in case of a severely shocking experience just as in the case of a little helplessness, for the infinite unites in itself not only the most universal views but also the most personal views, if this positive infinite is God. And, of course, in the sense of the gospel, he is the Father of Jesus, and our Father. What is wrong with the human being of the twentieth century is that in the realm of the finite he has everything taken care of: he has a refrigerator, car, colour TV, opportunity to travel abroad, but he has no contact with the infinite. In the midst of many finite possibilities he accepts the unpredictability of the infinite with ever growing anxiety and neurosis, and with a sense of desperation and helplessness.

I hope I have succeeded in explaining to you what Dostoevsky means when he says that the most important question facing man is to find personal relationship to the infinite.

It is an extremely long pathway leading through the understanding of man that brings him to this conclusion. In the *The House of the Dead* our writer tries to arrange prison society in different categories. But then he raises the question, 'Is this at all possible?' Reality is so infinitely colourful and does not tolerate strict, sharp divisions. It is necessary to observe with utter conscientiousness and in detail. But to do so, it is mandatory to fulfil two requirements; we have to cultivate our self-understanding, and we have to keep the discipline of objectivity. No hasty conclusion or insult, no conviction or insults should be allowed to lead to prejudice. So it turned out that the portrait of a host of prisoners completely changed in the eyes of the writer – in contrast with his first impression. Everybody is strictly individual, like their names or personal title. Everybody is replaceable, but nobody is exchangeable.

Individualistically-minded people are mostly humiliated in life: strangely enough others think that a poor man has nothing in his possession that could be sold or disposed of; a poor man does not even have self-esteem. But that is exactly why the poor ones are so sensitive. They size up with fear and mistrust everybody who is passing by; they listen intensely for every word and wonder what people might think of them. This is the reason why the 'mouse-hole man' decides to attack the proudly-walking army officer, and when finally he does it to boost his ego, the officer just walks away without even blinking, or reacting to it, pretending that nothing happened. That is how small, thoroughly insignificant, the officer considers this poor little creature.

But the unique, sensitive little soul does not consent to this. His autistic passion knocks down the barriers in the most determined ones and then turns to challenge the universe.

Raskolnikov asks, 'Is it permissible for

the extraordinary man to kill an old usurer in order to procure money to make humanity happy?' His answer is 'Yes' and he commits double murder here. By this he becomes a symbol for autistic man's rebellion, as he attempts to change all values.

But is it possible for him this way to realize his inner transcendency, his own infinity, becoming a homo viator of whom Pascal once wrote, 'Man becomes man only when he transcends himself infinitely'? 'No', replies Dostoevsky. By trans-evaluating all values, and breaking away from order, no one can realize the transcendency of his own infinity, no one can transcend himself endlessly.

To put this into effect, man in his autistic rebellion needs the integrated unity of the judicial and creative understanding of man: a humanism derived from Christ.

Allow me to explain this very difficult sentence in more detail. To associate the endless possibilities of our own spiritual life with true infinity, it is necessary to possess a judicial and creative understanding of man, and for these two, namely the self-convicting and self-reacting understanding of man to reach the heart in complete unity. This is the humanism derived from Christ, which on the one hand convicts us, and on the other recreates us: puts us to death and brings us back to life. One of the greatest twentieth-century theologians said, in complete agreement with Dostoevsky, 'There are two possibilities when one meets Christ; either one dies, and Christ lives in him, or one stays alive and kills Christ, putting him out of his life'. Strictly speaking, Dostoevsky emphasizes this sentence of theological language when he states, 'In the real understanding of man I first arrive at the realization that everybody is unique, then that everybody is unbelievably sensitive about himself – some acknowledging this and others denying it. When his sensitivity does not bring success, he becomes a rebel, but rebellion does not solve anything either, but only the humanism of Christ does, which comes from God, who condemns me and recreates me'. Naturally Dostoevsky is not the greatest at showing negatives, although he is very good at that too. Dostoevsky is truly a

giant when it comes to positives, since this is possible when someone – at least in soul and spirit – has truly lived through these things. Thus, this judgmental and creative understanding of man surfaces in *Crime and Punishment*, where the judge, Porfiri Petrovich, and Sonja share these two qualities in congenial unity. In Christ one finds the judgmental and recreative understanding of man together in one person, the understanding of man which transforms us to the likeness and image of Jesus. But to understand this truth better, Dostoevsky divides it up: in the judge he has the judgmental understanding of man, Sonja, and in Sonja the recreative understanding of man.

What kind of judgmental understanding of humanity does the judge possess? The profession of a judge as it appears in *Crime and Punishment* is an open art. In the order of divine prodigality it is above all selfish interest. The judge is not practising his profession in order to survive. He does not hear out Raskolnyikov constantly because he has some ulterior motive. The judicial understanding of humanity for this judge, I repeat, is an open art, and is Christ-like to the extent that art, the order of beauty, belongs really to the order of divine prodigality. Truth, accuracy and precision are the pillars of the order of the visible universe. We should try to imagine what really could happen if there were be a tiny mistake in the law of gravity or in the velocity of light that determines the relationship of matter and energy: $E=mc^2$. A mistaken decimal point here would cause the world to collapse. In connection with this, Nietzsche says, 'The entire history of the world is the experimental denial of the moral order of the universe'. But in vain does world history experimentally deny moral order, for moral order remains as long as there is goodness, thus Jesus, or in the twentieth century Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, or Martin Luther King. Without moral order there is no chance for humanity to survive, and the moral world order could not exist without goodness.

But without beauty life can go on, although the world will be greatly impoverished. I have to quote Franz Liszt, when

during an intermission in one of his concerts in Leningrad a general asked him in a very degrading way: 'Sir, have you ever been in war?' Liszt answered, 'Never, but did you ever give a concert?' The general became indignant when he continued, 'If we had not protected you from the enemy, you could never have given a concert'. Liszt replied, 'My dear Sir, if there were no artistic high points in life, there would be no reason at all to save anybody from the enemy'. Thus, beauty has been squandered upon this world by God, but without this squandering there would be no worth to the physical and moral universe that is sustained by truth and goodness.

In God's wasteful, prodigal economy Porfiri Petrovich in *Crime and Punishment* has the role of criminal judge. Kant once said, 'Beauty is that which pleases without selfish interest'. Porfiri Petrovich examines the guilty and remorseful Raskolnyikov without any selfish interest, with absolute objectivity, gentleman-like – if I may say so – as this is exactly Dostoevsky's expression. He does not reproach Raskolnyikov, there is no violent, premature interference on his part either; he always listens, always hears, if necessary he questions, and always waits, and keeps on waiting indefinitely. He gives opportunity for self-accusation and later for impeachment, but not to destroy Raskolnyikov, but solely for the purpose of seeking justice. In doing so, he is the embodiment of a Christ-like judicial understanding of man. What really is this Christ-like judicial understanding of man? It is an open art in God's prodigal order, it stays above all selfish interest, without prejudice, and it does not allow violent and premature meddling in someone's personal life – thus, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me'. I am not breaking down the door. Let him on the other side of the door live unjustly as long as he pleases. But meanwhile I keep speaking, waiting, and knocking. The hour of justice will come when somebody opens the door. Raskolnyikov, too, opened the door himself; it was not broken down by Porfiri Petrovich. So, what a genius this

Christ-like man of justice is, the embodiment of the judicial understanding of man in one of Dostoevsky's novels.

But of course, this alone is not enough! If Christ were only to bring justice without recreative love, then he would only be a plain judge instead of a Redeemer. This is the reason that Sonja stands beside Porfiri Petrovich in *Crime and Punishment* to be the God-given incarnation of the creative understanding of humanity for the sake of Raskolnikov. The mystery of God's understanding of humanity belongs to Sonja. Sonja sees him in the way God would like him to be. Sonja does not see Raskolnikov as everybody else would see him, nor as he would see himself; Sonja sees Raskolnikov as God looks upon her the same way. The only reason that she can forgive is because she was forgiven. The reason she can practise mercy is that she herself lives in this grace. The creative understanding of humanity becomes a creatively transforming knowledge, even through spiritual-moral death, since – and this is again a decisive Dostoevsky sentence – 'To truly believe in God means to believe in the resurrection; moreover this is the beginning of eternal life'.

The question is not whether there is life after death, but whether there is a God. And life after death is none other than the life of Almighty God, which sounds good theologically. Eternity is the life of the eternal God, and the resurrection is nothing else but a new creation by God out of annihilation, by the God who creates out of nothing. In the beginning of time God created the world from nothing, and at the end of time God creates a new heaven and new earth out of annihilation. Resurrection is another name for God who creates things anew. This is the reason why Sonja says, and through her Dostoevsky tells us, 'To believe in God means to believe in the resurrection, moreover this is the beginning of eternal life'.

Without this ultimate understanding of humanity, human destiny is spiritual, moral and physical death. With our understanding of humanity integrated into religion and faith, human destiny is the resurrection of Lazarus as we get this from

Crime and Punishment.

So this is the way Dostoevsky starts out to reach the perspective of twentieth-century faith in Christ, with the understanding of humanity integrated into religion. Thus, first comes uniqueness, sensitivity, vanity, barrier-breaking rebellion, then a judicial and recreating understanding of humanity.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHRIST-LIKE GOD-MAN

This is the focus of Dostoevsky's life work; in it Christ is always present as an original image of human existence, often hidden, other times quite apparent with effective force. According to Dostoevsky, the validity of this original image for believers and non-believers and even for nihilists, has decisive significance, 'If somebody were to prove to me that Christ and justice are altogether two different things, and I had to choose between these two I would definitely choose Christ'. But let us be careful, for this is thoroughly different from Ignatius Loyola's saying that, 'If I were to see that this ceiling is white and if the church said authoritatively that it is black, and only black, then I would confess with full conviction that it is truly and exclusively black'. But this has to do with the authority of the church and Dostoevsky would not have said this at all. He insists concerning the question, that the incarnated love of God is a superior truth over simple truth. In other words, 'If I had to choose between being right or loving, I would say, he who loves is right'. This is the sense in which Dostoevsky makes the above statement.

Christ is the ultimate ideal, who became flesh, and the most concrete reality. There is no talk of idealism here – if I may say so – here we talk about the materialism of the Word becoming flesh. This embodied ideal reveals humanity's secret in three ways:

1. First, Christ reveals humanity's destiny, the complete commitment of his ego to his fellow-men and to the universe with a love for the universe. This means that if Christ is in the centre, then my destiny is to love my fellow human beings and the

cosmos with Christ-like love. To cite Dostoevsky, 'Brothers, don't let yourselves be discouraged from loving by the wickedness of the world! Love your fellow men together with their sins, miseries and faults. Moreover, love the whole world of God, every small blade of grass and drop of water, all the birds and clouds, the sunrise and sunset. Love is the great power that one cannot resist, and when God is with us, we will see that there is nothing else like it'.

2. Secondly, Christ reveals earth-bound man's deviation from this destiny, his shameful distance from the ideal and nevertheless his constant endeavour to follow the ideal.

3. Thirdly, because of this endless deviation, Christ reveals the temporariness of our earthly being, and the eternity of a thoroughly different future.

So what is the meaning of Christ? 1. We are called to love every one of our fellowmen and the whole universe; 2. We have to acknowledge that we are unable to fulfil this call in our own strength; 3. Since we can not fulfil these tasks, we hope for a better land, we hope and yearn for a future state when through the grace of our resurrection, this call of Christ would be fulfilled in eternity.

This Christ brings us joy. The very first miracle in Cana promoted this joy. Thus, Christ is not the pale Galilean for Dostoevsky, but as Aljosa Karamazov, one of the strongest believers in his novels, cries out excitedly, 'Miracle in Cana. The distribution of wine among the desperate guests. What a lovely miracle! So, with his first miracle Jesus enhanced joy instead of sorrow, thus contributing to the joy of men'. This joy-bringing Christ has decisive significance for Dostoevsky, who had been through a lot of suffering. This very same Christ brings beauty, since he is the absolute beauty. The imbecile sees the true face of Nastasja Lilipovna the same way. 'This is not your true face', he says to this beautiful woman in the midst of a hysterical fit. 'Christ wants to see you in a different light, and I see you in a different light, too'. Her facial expression smoothed out, and now it was not just Nastasja Lilipovna's

facial muscles, but her soul that laughed. Christ brought her this beauty. Christ brings redemption through the power of his unintentional effect on humanity and through his works. In connection with this we would like to emphasise that although the so-called 'Russian Christ' is Dostoevsky's decisive message, yet he does not insist on it. The real Christ above is everything, in whom suffering is eternal and almost impersonally universal. Thus, in the life-work of Dostoevsky the most significant thing is not the spiritual conquest of a Russian Christ, but the Christ who, being God, suffered and endured all the suffering of the whole world. Through this, suffering becomes personal; all of us are suffering for everybody else and this universal suffering is Christ, through whose suffering we will be blessed by eternal righteousness, happiness and the resurrection.

The *locus classicus* for this is the scene in *Crime and Punishment* when Raskolnykov falls before Sonja's feet and says, 'I am not kneeling before you, I am kneeling before the suffering of the entire humanity!' The suffering of the whole humanity is universal, but in the man of Nazareth, Christ personally became flesh. Thus, in the perspective of a twenty-first-century faith in Christ, the greatest work of Dostoevsky gives such a knowledge of the Christ-like God-man, which bears the concentration and endurance of universal suffering, in which we do not expect a conquering Saviour, but a suffering Saviour, before whom we fall on our knees together with suffering humanity. For Christ says, 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'. And as Raskolnykov said to Sonja, 'I am not kneeling before you, but before all the suffering humanity!' The suffering Redeemer truly redeems the world and he alone, instead of all the conquering redeemers who, by the weight of their own greatness, crush the world to death.

A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD PREVAILING OVER RADICAL DENIAL

According to the message of Dostoevsky's

great life-work, the knowledge of God of the twenty-first century should be such that it endures the Kirilovian annihilation of God, the Schatowian God-radicalization, Ivan Karamazov's negative theodicy and the atheism for Christ of Kirilov.

Thus, a self-evident faith in God – according to Dostoevsky's nineteenth-century life-work – would lose its validity completely and only faith in the non-self-evident God will survive in the twenty-first century. In the twenty-first century only a faith going through the purifying furnace of the greatest doubts will stand a chance. Among these purifying furnaces the most prominent one is the *Kirilovian annihilation of God*.

Kirilov decides to commit suicide so as to prove for all times, with his will left behind, his heroic attitude of not being afraid of God and of eternity. Thus, he attempts to prove once and for all with his suicide that no one should be afraid of God and of the other world. 'With this suicide I shall not annihilate myself, because I will become an absolute hero, but I will annihilate God, because I will prove that nobody should be afraid of him', he said. No one ever described more vividly the continuous drama of the separation of his spirit from God, as did Fjodor Mihajlovich Dostoevsky.

In the same way, faith in God must endure the *Schatowian radicalization*. When the devils, the fallen ones, are talking about the problems of life, about life and death, sickness, crimes and human manipulations, Schatow cries out, 'Let's not talk about superfluous, second rate questions. Let's talk about the fundamental question, Is there a God or not?' And they decide together: If this is what the world is like, then only one conclusion can be drawn, that there is a God. The twenty-first century's faith in God has to endure the *negative theodicy of Ivan Karamazov as well*. When Aljosa Karamazov becomes enthusiastic about the goodness of God with his faith in a self-evident God and Ivan Karamazov says, 'You naive child, just be elated. Anyway what have you seen in life? But I, who have seen Kozaks tearing babies from their mother's arms to toss them up in the air, and to catch them with

their bayonets, how can I believe in God? If this is what life is like, then I am returning my theatre-ticket to the play of life, to the director of the theatre'. Aljosa covering his face with his hands cries out in answer, 'Stop it, it's enough' – then falling on his knees says, 'My dear God, I don't want to rebel against you, only I cannot accept your world'. The conclusion of how the faith of Aljosa Karamazov endures the negative theodicy of Ivan Karamazov is this, 'He dropped to the ground as a weak child and he rose as a determined fighter for the rest of his life. Somebody visited my soul in that hour', he proclaimed later with a strong faith. In his prayer he descended even deeper than the ghastly sin of bayoneted children, he descended to the crucifixion of Golgotha, to the unjust execution of God, and he who ever descends to such a depth, should be able to endure the theodicean problem of every smaller sin in this world. But the faith in God of the twenty-first century can only be one that endures the negative theodicy of Ivan Karamazov as well.

Finally, the twenty-first century's faith has to endure even the atheism for Christ of Kirilov. This is what Kirilov says at night to those with whom he is conversing: Hear this now! One day there were three crosses that stood in the centre of the world, and he that is the greatest of all who ever lived on the earth was hanging on one of those crosses. Without this man our whole planet is but foolishness. No one like him ever lived before him or after him. He had a strong faith, but the things he believed in did not come true. If the laws of nature are themselves a lie, how could I believe in them? And if the laws of nature did not want to spare him, then this whole planet is just the source of a lie. All of this is just a devilish comedy, therefore why should I go on living? – this is an atheism, because of the sufferings of Christ. Let suicide be committed as a proof that one has overcome the fear of God and the fear of what comes after death. Dostoevsky's faith prevails over all these arguments. Ivan denies the God who exists; Tolstoy seeks after the God who must be until he finds him. But Dostoevsky found God in denial

as well as in faith, in Ivan as well as in Aljosa. This is what the statement means, that in the perspective of a twenty-first century faith in Christ there is a place for a knowledge of God which prevails over radical denial.

THE DEEP-REALISTIC KNOWLEDGE OF SATAN

Our next point is the deep-realistic knowledge of Satan. He who descends to the depths, finds hell and will reach the final divine only through hell. He will see not only absolute evil, the radical evil of Kant, but malignancy in principle, and beyond that, Satan himself. Satan appears to Ivan Karamazov and declares three things to him: first, that he does not exist; second, that he himself is Ivan Karamazov the man; and thirdly he declares that he is the devil.

So, this is the deep-realistic knowledge of Satan. First Satan declares that, 'lo Yahweh' – 'I don't exist', and indeed it is undesirable on biblical grounds to believe strongly in Satan, for there is serious trouble if we see the devil in everything, although as Luther said, 'I am convinced the world is full of devils. But it is even more full of God'. But if I say that there is no evil lower than the depth of man and stronger than the strength of man, then the evil one will prove that he indeed exists. For example, he will prove this with the two World Wars, so we should not feel a shortage of proofs. By these he shows us that he exists, yet he says that he does not exist. Secondly, when we become suspicious that nevertheless there is an evil lower than man and higher than man, then he says, 'That is only you, yourself'. You, Ivan Karamazov, you Loránt Hegedüs, you, who do not know what to do against such an evil. And Satan is partly right that he does not exist at all, since he is the lord of nothing, and he lives on nothing, on a destructive nothingness. As the lack of air could in itself be devastating, although it is around us in most places, so evil, too, exists as a power that influences the worst in us in favour of the rebellion of the greatest depths and of the greatest heights.

Finally, he says that he is the devil. But why is he saying this now, when earlier he said, 'lo Yahweh' – 'I don't exist'? Somehow the reason is – and this is the same with Dostoevsky too – what Max Frisch says in the twentieth century in *Biedermann and the Arsonist* that the announcement of the truth is the concealing of the truth at the highest level, in an age living so far away from God. Since everybody has got so used to lies, nobody believes it when truth is declared. When something is said, everybody believes just the opposite. Therefore, at a time when they consider him an absolute liar, even the devil is willing to acknowledge that he really is the devil.

This is the deep-realistic knowledge of Satan. Naturally, we cannot leave out the vision of the great inquisitor. In the legend he introduces the great, dreadful and clever spirit, the spirit of self-destruction and non-existence, who did not tempt Jesus, but turned around every truth to its exact opposite, in his first temptation the mystery, and in the third one the authority. Thus, in essence, Satan did not tempt Jesus, Satan showed him only how the message of the preaching and of the miracles of Christ would be turned into an anti-Christ message, how they would put on their signs for signs, how they would alter the mystery into secrecy, and how they would form authority in his name to prevent Jesus from becoming everybody's Redeemer. To talk in detail about the great inquisitor's vision, we would need another lecture, of course. Thus, we have to be satisfied with this much, that according to the great inquisitor Jesus was not tempted by the great, dreadful and clever spirit, the spirit of annihilation and non-existence, but he was only given every truth in a Satanic setting – in the case of the miracle, 'Jump off the the top of the temple', and finally the authority, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me'.

In the deep-realistic knowledge of Satan we have to know that Satan shows himself in three ways. He works the best when we thoroughly ignore him, when we think that we are completely on our own, and will become our own gods; and then he works the best way again, when we no longer

believe the truth to be the truth.

In spite of the above, the deep-realistic knowledge of Satan in Dostoevsky's work never becomes the centre, the knowledge of Christ is always in the centre, and always remains true to the biblical style that, strictly speaking, we know only one decisive fact about Satan – that with the crucifixion of Christ at Golgotha, Satan lost his decisive battle.

THE SPIRITUAL-SCIENTIFIC WORLD-KNOWLEDGE

Here we point out three things again, that the world was created by God and stands by contingency instead of necessity. 'Why is there something at all, and why not rather just nothing?' Philosophers have been asking this question from Leibnitz to Heidegger, till this day. Is it not self-evident that there is a world and that we exist, too? It is a miracle! Therefore, from the human standpoint, our whole life is rooted in this miracle, and the life of the world is based on the unpredictable, on contingency; but theologically, from God's point of view, the life of the world is based on God's creative miracle. We are unable to picture this God conceptually, but only in symbols, for example, in the sign of the Trinity. Since God is beyond our intellect, he is imperceptible for us. While these symbols – the Trinity, the cross, the dove of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine of holy communion, the baptismal water – are kept alive and urge us to speak the unspeakable and to join in some positive common vibrations with the infinite, culture will be kept alive, and culture will be positive. But human culture always wants to realize the symbols, wants to bring God's kingdom down to the earth, and when it becomes too strong, then it becomes evident that this attempt remains unsuccessful. Then the symbols cool off, the triangle of the Trinity does not say anything any more, the multitude of signs in holy communion say nothing, and the cross of Golgotha says nothing, and culture will be transformed into civilization. Civilization in turn will arrive at tragedy when nobody is willing to believe its cul-

tural and religious fundamental truths. Then suddenly when we think that we are so well off, we become depressed, and we feel that there is no place for us, either here or somewhere else. Life has no meaning for us. Then in this condition, Dostoevsky, according to his spiritual-scientific world knowledge, announces that there is no other way but to fill the thoroughly burned-out symbols not with the old content, but with content discovered in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Then in this new culture civilization will flourish again, and humanity will regain the meaning of its life.

AN URGENT DEMAND FOR CONVERSION AND PROMISE OF RESURRECTION

The decisive and final need in this is an urgent demand for conversion and the promise of resurrection. In our conversion God's vertical line crosses our horizontal line.

- a. Raskolnyikov's conversion: from murderer to resurrection, from Nietzsche-like self-assertion to a humane love of Sonja.
- b. Aljosa Karamazov's conversion: from goodness to goodness. From considering himself good to the love of the earth: 'Someone visited my soul in that hour'.
- c. The converted life of Prince Myskin: the lifestyle of the 'foolishness' of Christ as seen in the Sermon on the Mount.

They all are converted, Raskolnyikov, Aljosa Karamazov and Prince Myskin, and they all proclaim with their converted lives that the realization of the life of Christ is the only thing that provides a foundation for all of our lives.

The life-work of Dostoevsky with its final goal ending in conversion and having the perspective of a twenty-first-century faith in Christ, is, according to Antal Azerb, like the wonderful sonnet of R. M. Rilke, entitled 'Archaic Torso of Apollo'. As the archaic torso, this ancient statue, is exposed to the sun again, it proclaims the need to change our lives, and so does the life-work

of Dostoevsky. In closing, let us then hear the sonnet of Rilke, and put the emphasis on its last line:

We cannot know his legendary head,
with eyes like ripening fruit. And yet
his torso is still suffused, with brilliance
from inside, like a lamp, in which his
gaze,

now turned to low, gleams in all its power.
Otherwise
the curved breast could not dazzle you so,
nor could
a smile run through the placid hips and
thigh to
that dark centre, where procreation
flared.

Otherwise this stone would seem defaced
beneath the translucent cascade of the
shoulders
and would not glisten like a wild beast's
fur.

Would not, from all the borders of itself,
burst like a star: for here there is no
place that
does not see you. You must change your
life!