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Russian “New Theology” in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century: On the Question of the Genesis and Content of the Concept

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22394/2311-3448-2019-6-1-86-104>

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In this article I consider the genesis and the substantial characteristics of the concept of “New Theology,” which has become a commonplace in the Russian theological tradition since the end of the 19th century. Initially this term was applied to lay theologians — particularly, to Khomiakov — but afterward was applied to academic scholars as well, such as metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, V.I. Nesmelov, et al. Research shows that in the first decades of the 20th century these authors’ works met with a mixed reception: from very enthusiastic support (e.g., Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky) to strong critique and opposition (e.g., Bishop Viktor Ostrovidov). Later Archpriest Georges Florovsky attempted to give an objective characterization of this theological movement. He defined it as a theology coming not from Revelation but from human experience. The analysis undertaken in this article revealed another significant characteristic of “New Theology,” which is its continuity with the ideas and methodology of the lay theologians on the basis of the principle of confessionalization.

Keywords: confessionalization, new theology, Russian academic theology, the history of the Synodal period, Khomiakov, Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, Nesmelov, Archpriest Georges Florovsky, ecclesiology, anthropology.

The theory of confessionalization and extra-academic theology

IN discussing the phenomenon of lay theology or extra-academic theology¹ in the Russian 19th century it is fair to say that the internal logic of the development of its ideas is that of confessionalization. The theory of confessionalization was developed and put into scientific circulation by German scientists E. Zeeden, W. Reinhard, and H. Schilling. Professor M.V. Dmitriev notes:

Confessionalization implies: first, the formation and the development of specifically confessional discourses, specifically confessional institutions, and specifically confessional consciousness in the Protestant and Catholic cultures of the modern period (these processes are described as the first and basic stage of confessionalization — *Konfessionsbildung*); secondly, a new symbiosis of ecclesiastical and state institutions, religious and secular policies; the processes, mechanisms, and institutions of joint influence of denomination and state-confessional institutions and factors based on the social, political, cultural, and economic life of Catholic and Protestant societies of Europe in the early modern period. In its cumulative effect, confessionalization opposes the processes of secularization; and nevertheless, it turns out to be the most important aspect of both the transition to modernity and the genesis of the new European civilization itself. (Dmitriev 2012, 142)

Below I will not touch upon the history of institutions. I am primarily interested in pointing out the fact that the process of confessionalization is an ever-increasing tendency that captures different spheres of religious mentality. This tendency, in its extreme, aspires to the polarization of the religious traditions included in this mentality. Finally, the theory of confessionalization can be supplemented by yet another

1. In prerevolutionary tradition, it was more common to speak about *secular theologians* (see, for example, Antonov 1912) when speaking of those who did not belong to the clergy. However, while the term *secular theologian* may be considered acceptable, the term *secular theology*, by default, already has a negative connotation. Therefore, the term *extra-academic theology*, which is more neutral, will be used below. It is predicated upon the fact that during most of the Synodal period, religious education was social class (or estate) based, and the nature of theological studies was determined not by the presence or absence of clerical rank, but by the presence or absence of systematic theological education (those professors of spiritual academies who did not become priests belonged to the spiritual estate or clergy as well).

provision: the very need for confessionalization arises mainly in the location of a *common cultural field*, such as Europe on the eve of the Reformation (see also Khondzinskii 2015, 9–17).

In Russia at the beginning of the 19th century a common cultural field already existed, a single horizon of mutual communication with the Western tradition, but, due to the stratification of the nation into “society” and “the people,” this horizon was fully realized only in educated society. At the same time, the representatives of educated society did not have the opportunity to receive a systematic theological education, which was available only to the representatives of the clergy through their respective academies. In fact, it was exactly this circumstance that caused the phenomenon of extra-academic theology mentioned above, which was spread by people from the educated stratum. It was also they who sharply criticized Western Christianity in all its manifestations.

The clergy, in turn, continued to live the old pre-Synodal type of life, and it is simple to find empirical evidence of the fact that they were barely involved in the process of confessionalization. There is no notable theological essay produced within the scope of any theological academy or school in Russia up to the last decades of the 19th century that contains an effort to criticize Western Christian civilization as a whole or even Western theology as such.

It should be added that although the university Statute of 1814 clearly patronized Platonism in the field of philosophical sciences, it could not prevent the learning of German Romantic Philosophy in spiritual and academic contexts (primarily, in the Kiev Academy).

In the middle of the 1820s, interest in this philosophy also manifested itself in secular circles. According to A. Koire, December 14, 1825 (the Decembrist Uprising), was a milestone that marked the end of French influence: “The next generation, to which the Slavophiles belonged, was imbued with a very different spirit: it grew up under the increasing influence of German Romantic Philosophy” (Koire 2003, 27).

This philosophy was studied in the secret circle of “Liubomudry” (“Lovers of Wisdom”) that appeared in 1822 and existed until December 1825, and where “Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Oken, Görres, et al. dominated” (Koliupanov 1889–92, 1:2:73). The circle became the forerunner of the Slavophile movement, and one of its members, I.V. Kireevsky, later expressed the idea that this philosophy could serve as the basis for a “new liubomudrye” (i.e., philosophy), the prototype for which would be the philosophy of the Church Fathers (Kireevskii

1911, 1:270), for whom in turn ancient metaphysics served as a basis. The intention was for “Liubomudrye” to become the foundation for a relevant and up-to-date exposition of the truths of Revelation and holy tradition (Kireevskii 1911, 1:271).²

As a result of these (and other) differently directed forces and tendencies, in the second half of the 1840s Khomiakov’s theology appeared, which gives us one of the first vivid examples not only of a “new liubomudrye,” but also of the practical implementation of the differentiation of traditions implied by the process of confessionalization.

For Khomiakov, the main issue is, of course, the question of the church. The answer to this question is related to two other questions: first, the internal structure of the church in terms of the relationship between the clergy and the laity; and second, the external structure (i.e., the boundaries of the church) in terms of the relationship between Orthodoxy and other denominations. Both of these issues, from Khomiakov’s point of view, should be resolved in an way different from that of Western tradition.

While traditional Catholic theology is characterized by the division of the church into teaching hierarchy (i.e., the clergy or hierarchy) and laity, and both Catholic and Orthodox dogmatists most often define Church as a Christian society (Plank 1960, 50), from Khomiakov’s point of view the Church is not a society (Khomiakov 1907c, 2:12). The earthly Church (or Church visible) is only a phenomenon of the Church in heaven (Church invisible) and correlates with the latter as a thing-in-itself (noumenon) in the Kantian sense (Khondzinskii 2014, 86–93). But, ultimately, the main principle that allows Khomiakov to solve the question about the internal structure of the church is “the principle of *sobornost’*,” understood as an organic unity in love. This unity is not only moral, but also, if you will, gnoseological, because cognition of the Truth can be achieved only in the love of the Church, or rather in the love of the community (Khomiakov 1907a, 2:239). Hence the absence of a “Teaching Church” (hierarchy) in the Orthodox tradition (Khomiakov 1907b, 2:83).

For the Catholic tradition (and others [Feofan 2004, 287–88; cf. 364–65]) the foundation of the Church is connected primarily with the earthly life of Christ. Khomiakov, by contrast, seeks to find a con-

2. The relevance of the language of the new philosophy (in this) to the language of Revelation and the Church Fathers was implied by default. This is evidenced by Khomiakov’s curious remark that today the apostle would have preferred the concept of the *object* (a concept from modern philosophy) to the biblical concept of the *Word (Logos)*, used in the language of the apostles (see Khomiakov 1907a, 2:247–48).

nection between ecclesiology and the events of New Testament history that are not identical with Catholic teaching, and finds this in the events of Pentecost, when the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostolic Community introduces the latter to the life of the Holy Trinity, because the intra-trinitarian action of the Holy Spirit — as the new cognition of love — is identical to its action in the Church. According to Khomiakov, on the one hand, intra-trinitarian relations can be characterized as the relationship of *the subject* (the Father), who considers himself an *object* (the Son), resulting in the *new cognition* (the Holy Spirit) (Khomiakov 1994b, 2:335); on the other hand, it is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostolic Community (who remains in the unity of love) that provides the latter *the cognition of the truth* (Khomiakov 1994a, 2:12), for it is the act of the eternal proceeding of the Spirit from the Father. Only a temporary sending of the Spirit to the creation through/from the Son remains available to outsiders/Westerners (unorthodox), who had broken the law of love (Khomiakov 1907c, 2:11–12). Thus, the intra-trinitarian characteristics of the Spirit reveal themselves on the day of Pentecost and introduce the Church into the mystery of intra-trinitarian life (O’Leary 1982, 16).

This resolution of the issue was indeed Khomiakov’s discovery, and it provided a solid theological foundation for the thesis of the primacy of the community over everything in the Church, as a successor to the “Trinity-Community”; at the same time, this answer made it possible to draw a sharp line between East and West, making the Orthodox doctrine of the Church completely independent of Western ecclesiology.

At the same time, it should be noted that Khomiakov’s fundamentally anti-Western concept had been shaped under the evident influence not only of Kant, but also of I.A. Möhler, a major German theologian of the first third of the 19th century, a representative of “Romantic Theology,” so called, whose ideas were closely connected with German Romantic philosophy. It is from Möhler that Khomiakov borrows the idea of the Church as an “organism of love,”³ as well as

3. “It’s not a trifle that Khomiakov has so fervently approved of Möhler; he loves this Church, where everything is about the whole, animated in love by the same spirit, and where the hierarchy, not being seen as an authority (teaching and government) with a special ‘power’ over the faithful as over the *subjects*, on the contrary, reveals itself as an organ of the whole body that gives the whole body an expression of its faith and its unity in love” (Congar 1935, 327). See also: Bolshakoff 1946. For the basic principles of Romantic theology, see Vermeil 1913, 11. Cf: Titova 2014, 49.

the corresponding hermeneutics of the word καθολικός (*katholikos*) (Möhler 1957, 254–55; Khomiakov 1886, 2:326–27).

Thus, Khomiakov's conception fully met Kireevsky's requirements for the new Liubomudrye; in accordance with the principles of confessionalization, it segregated the concepts of Western and Eastern theology completely, and moreover, it allowed criticism of the Russian theological school for its commitment to the Catholic doctrine of the "Teaching Church" (hierarchy) (Khomiakov 1900a, 8:189; Kireevskii 1911b, 2:258), opposing them to the laymen who were not infected by foreign influences.

The emergence of the term "New Theology" and various authors' understanding of it

Khomiakov's theological works did not reach the Russian reader at once. Some of his works were initially published in *Dushepoleznoe chtenie* (Edifying readings) but the Prague edition of his works, prepared by J.F. Samarin, who wrote a conceptual preface to it, is much more significant. This is where Khomiakov was first mentioned as a teacher of the Church (Samarin 1886, 2:xxxvi). Although this expression may seem rhetorical at first glance, it was, as a matter of fact, undoubtedly quite "dogmatic." According to Samarin, it is not patristic works, but *catechism* that embodies the most complete statement of the Church's teaching about itself (Samarin 1880b, 5:23n). Hence it becomes clear not only why Samarin added a subtitle — "An experience of catechetical teaching about the Church" — to Khomiakov's treatise "The Church Is One," but Khomiakov himself, quoting from his own text, calls it "a Russian catechism" (Khomiakov 1886a, 2:130).

However, at first both the words about Khomiakov as a teacher of the Church and his works themselves were met with suspicion in the professional theological environment. But the ice of distrust was melting rapidly: the scrapping of the walls between social classes launched by the Great Reforms had been increasingly successful, and the charm of new ideas and approaches was so great that in the 1880s it became almost impossible to criticize them. The first hints of a picture of "New Theology" were being formed at that time in the minds of those authors who belonged to the religious-academic environment, and it is characteristic that those hints arise in connection with the analysis of Khomiakov's works.

The term that we are interested in seems to have first been used by a professor of the St. Petersburg Academy, N.I. Barsov; to be more

precise, he used the expression “a new method in theology.” One of his two articles devoted to the analysis of Khomiakov’s works was published under this exact title in the journal *Khristianskoe chtenie* (Christian reading). In these articles, Barsov opposed Khomiakov’s approaches to those of a scholastic nature inherent in the religious-academic system of theological education,⁴ and located the new method both in the historico-philosophical approach to the consideration of theological problems (Barsov 1869, 201), and in reliance on the patristic heritage (Barsov 1878, 310).

The term “New Theology” appeared somewhat later in another church magazine, *Vera i razum* (Faith and mind), which announced a series of articles on “our new philosophers and theologians” — representatives of extra-academic theology of the next generation, such as V.S. Soloviev or L.N. Tolstoy (See Stoianov 1885). It is interesting that although the authors of *Vera i razum*, and Barsov as well, paid attention to the use of philosophical methodology by the “new theologians,” they set themselves the opposite goal: “to prove, as far as possible for us, the illegality of the invasion of philosophy into the field of religious Christian truths; and to prove the philosophical method to be unsatisfactory in this area” (Stoianov 1885, 1:49).

The fact that the expression “new theologians” was becoming a commonplace was evidenced, among other things, by the fact that not only representatives of the academic community, but also Leo Tolstoy himself, called Khomiakov and his followers “new theologians” (Tolstoi 1957a, 222).

A closer examination of the publications in the church periodicals of those years could certainly provide additional evidence of the use of the term in question. In the meantime, it is enough for now to state the fact that around the beginning of the 20th century this term clearly changes its referent and points to authors from the professional academic environment (which does not exclude different assessments of their ideas).

Thus, Bishop Viktor (Ostrovidov) in his article “New Theologians” (1912) wrote about the new theological movement, which aimed to revive “dead” theological science, and which was headed by Antony (Khrapovitsky), archbishop of Volyn and Sergius (Stragorodsky), archbishop of Finland, “whose works pretend to be regarded as a reviv-

4. In religious-academic science of the 19th century, *scholasticism* implied: (a) dependence on Western models; (b) the desire for excessive systematization of the material. In this sense, Iu.F. Samarin remark that the theological system in Orthodoxy is impossible is quite characteristic (Samarin 1886, 2: xxiii).

al of true patristic teaching” (Viktor 1912, 381). In fact, according to Bishop Viktor, the new theologians based their teaching on the laws of human mental life, “where everything should be in a natural order” (ibid., 382–83).

Archbishop Hilarion (Troitsky) refers to the same movement and its same authors (although in the opposite way) in an article titled “Theology and the Freedom of the Church” (1915):

Thank God a new theological movement, which overthrows the deadly bonds of the preceding Scholasticism has appeared. . . . A wide dissemination and complete dominance of this new movement should be necessarily achieved. (Hilarion 2004, 2:262)

In this article, Sergius Stragorodsky represents this new theological movement, and although Antony Khrapovitsky is not mentioned in the text, judging by repeated references to him in the author’s other works and in a similar context, we can assume that his presence was implied here as well.

Finally, many years later the term in question was used by Archpriest Georges Florovsky in his work *Ways of Russian Theology*, which included, apart from Antony Khrapovitsky, V.I. Nesmelov as well. Florovsky tried to formulate a common feature, or main “marker” of New Theology: the desire for its constructions comes not from God, but from man, not from Revelation, but from experience (as Viktor Ostrovidov pointed out):

“Scholastic” theology had long since been unsatisfying, the “historical” method did not give the synthesis specifically, it did not create systems. The search for a new method had shifted to the explanation of the dogmas in a moral aspect. Dogmatics was reshaped in accordance with a moral standpoint. Antony was then one of the brightest representatives of this new theology. (Florovskii 2009, 550)

And below:

There are two possible ways in theology: from above or below, from God or from man, from Revelation or from experience. Patristics and Scholasticism choose the first way. “New Theology” prefers the way from below. One type of this anthropological bias is moralism in theology, but not the only one. (Florovskii 2009, 565)

Given such mixed assessments a question arises: what really forms the characteristic features of this doctrine and what connects new theologians from the laity with new theologians from academic circles?

The first representatives of “New Theology” from the religious-academic environment

As already noted, in Russian educated society the process of confessionalization began at the beginning of the 19th century, and a little later began the exploration of German Romantic philosophy. However, the religious school did not stand still either, and the theological intentions of Archbishop Innokentii of Kherson (Borisov) were largely determined by the need to respond to Kant and his purely humanistic Christology.

However, in noting the proximity of the philosophical background of academic and non-academic theologians, we also find important differences: the former have a concentration of interest primarily in the field of anthropology/psychology, the latter in the field of ecclesiology; and in the first case the absence, and in the second the presence of the vector of confessionalization. This probably explains the fact that Innokentii Borisov highly appreciated *Dogmatic Theology* by Metropolitan Macarius (Bulgakov) as a work in which Russian theology threw off the confines of scholasticism, while for Slavophiles Macarius became a symbol of slavery to the scholastic West.

At any rate, it is hardly a coincidence that it was in the 1880s and 1890s, a period of time when Khomiakov’s ideas were widely disseminated, that the “marker of confessionalization” became important for the formation of a new academic theology, allowing the latter to oppose the scholastic past and confidently assert itself as the path to a theological revival in the future.

This is confirmed by the fact that Antony Khrapovitsky, in his leading article “The Difference between the Orthodox Faith and the Western Confessions,” called Khomiakov his predecessor on the path toward the renewal of the Russian theological tradition, whose “great merit” consists of his pointing out the difference between the true Church and the Western confessions, “not in particular dogmatic peculiarities, but in the overall superiority of the inner ideal of the true Church over the non-Orthodox churches.”⁵ Antony saw

5. Antonii 2007a, 415. Characteristically, Khomiakov’s genealogy has been ascribed to the new academic theologians by Fr. Pavel Florensky. See Florenskii 1916, 527.

his task as “filling in” Khomiakov’s teachings and thus finally giving to Orthodox theology the content that “constitutes its exclusive belonging, which is equally alien to European confessions” (Antonii 2007a, 415). As for the Church, Khomiakov had already formulated this teaching of the exclusiveness of Orthodoxy, and what remained was to develop it in regard to the study of humanity, because Russian theological science was “so far from the real spiritual life of the Orthodox Christians, and so alien to it, that it is not only incapable of leading the latter, but even of approaching it [i.e., the spiritual life]” (Antonii 2007a, 417). Following the West, Russian theological science understands salvation as “an external reward for a certain number of good deeds (external ones),” whereas, in fact (Antonii 2007a, 420), “the purpose of Christianity, the purpose of Christ coming to earth is the moral perfection of the human personality” (Antonii 2007b, 420).

In developing his own doctrine, Antony’s method is similar to Khomiakov’s. If the latter, in order to avoid intersections with the West, moves the ecclesiological accents from Christology to Triadology, Antony moves the center of gravity of the dogma of redemption from Golgotha to the Garden of Gethsemane with the same purpose (Antonii 2007b, 58); he also looks for opportunities to rethink the consequences of original sin in categories that are far from its “legal” imputation to the descendants of Adam (Antonii 2007b, 71). To solve the first problem, he proposes a teaching of redemption as an act of compassionate love (Antonii 2007b, 58); to solve the second, he suggests the concept of “preconscious” universal human will, which is the common mental nature of humanity, according to its essence, but after the Fall turns out as fragmented individual wills (Antonii 2007d, 31–32; Florovskii 2009, 544). In both cases, it is easy to notice the features of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, which is not surprising: Antony’s close acquaintance with Schopenhauer’s works is evident in his master’s thesis. It is also indicated by the fact that, while analyzing Dostoevsky’s teaching on Christian love in his articles on pastoral theology, Antony denotes it through the concept of “compassionate love,” which (see Antonii 2007e, 264–78) was so important to Schopenhauer (Schopenhauer 2011, 296–97), but which cannot be found in Dostoevsky’s legacy, although the great Russian writer did have certain parallels with the German thinker (Khondzinskii 2013). It is not difficult to see Kant’s thought in Antony’s understanding of holiness as gradual moral self-improvement as well (Antonii 2007f, 722; Kant 1965, 4:1:446, cf. 455–56).

The name of his closest student, Sergius Stragorodsky, is often mentioned with Antony's. Stragorodsky's main theological work is the master's thesis titled "The Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation" — it is a work in which the author's personal position appears to be completely dissolved in the thoughts of the Holy Fathers, but in fact it is not. He proclaims the fundamental difference between Orthodox theology and Western theology, based not on different dogmatic postulates, but on a different "understanding of life," on the very first pages of this study; this exact postulate defines the author's interpretation of the Holy Fathers he cites. Antony attributes everything that contradicts his position to the fact that the Holy Fathers perforce had to reckon with the low level of education of the audience. In this sense, the "Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation" appears as one of the first attempts to *rethink* the Holy Fathers. In the end, Antony Khrapovitsky's favorite thesis of gradual moral self-improvement, that is, sanctity, understood as "the completion of moral self-education of a human being," remains predominant (Sergii 1898, 118).

V.I. Nesmelov, who was mentioned by Florovsky together with Antony, and earned at the time the latter's enthusiastic review, developed the anthropological line of New Theology in his own way. Formally (and perhaps fundamentally), Nesmelov had no criticism of the West. However, some of his statements are strikingly similar to those of Sergius: Sergius sees the difference between heterodoxy (unorthodoxy) and Orthodoxy as the dissimilarity between two irreconcilable worldviews, the legal and the moral; while the representatives of the first worldview seek happiness, those of the second seek the truth. Nesmelov likewise formulates the juxtaposition of the legal and moral ways to understand Christianity. Admittedly, the legal understanding is also characteristic of the Holy Fathers, who adapted their views to the customs of the Gentiles (see Sergius above). But if we take the legal understanding in its purest form, then it

directly and decisively destroys both the truths of religion and the possibility of morality, because by virtue of this relationship *religion becomes a mere deal with God and as an ordinary everyday deal it has necessarily to obey the principle of happiness in life*. So it was and is indeed, in the field of all natural religions without exception. (Nesmelov 2000, 1:277)

Hence, in particular, Roman "legalism" is not above the level of natural religions.

So, the study *Science of Man* by Nesmelov implicitly contains criticism of the Western religious tradition, which is no less harsh than that of Sergius's "Orthodox Doctrine of Salvation," and in a sense complements it. Indeed, whereas Sergius only described the progress of a person on the way to salvation without saying a word about why this salvation is necessary for him and where the possibility of it came from, Nesmelov, based on the data of experimental psychology, built not only an anthropological, but also a Christological concept, at the center of which is an idea of personality independent of its soul-body nature. This personality, from Nesmelov's point of view, is not affected by the fall of man, so that when Christ — through the Incarnation — heals human nature in Himself, "the communion . . . with the living body of Christ and the true revelation of the divine power of Christ in man" allows the followers of Christ to imitate Him in His moral feat and thus move forward on the path of moral perfection. Thus Nesmelov responded to the challenge of Kant, who had called traditional Christology into question on the basis that Christ, who did not know the human struggle against sin, could not be the moral ideal for us. But at the same time Nesmelov relies not only on experimental psychology, but also on the anthropology of Kant himself, who separated the personality (the carrier of autonomous morals) from the soul-body nature of man (the carrier of heterogeneous morals) (Kant 1980a, 96–98).

Having briefly considered the most important works of the first representatives of the New Theology from the religious-academic environment, we can see that they — following their predecessors from the laity — use the language of the Western humanities (German philosophy, psychology), mastered by the school by that time, first of all, in order to make a sharp distinction between Orthodox theology and the Western Christian tradition. And the need for such distinction arises for them under the influence of Khomiakov's ideas, which were widespread at the time. In addition, the extraordinary influence of the new movement should be noted. For example, Viktor Ostrovidov decided to publish his criticism of the New Theology only in an Old Believer magazine and then anonymously.

Refraction of the ideas of "New Theology" by academic theologians of the late 19th–early 20th century

There were other authors with similar intentions. These ideas were uniquely combined in the works of Archpriest E. Akvilonov, who paid

tribute to both the ecclesiological and anthropological direction. In his doctoral dissertation titled “On the Physical and Teleological Evidence of the Existence of God,” he started from the phenomenology of the soul, in this way following his predecessors — Antony Khrapovitsky and Bishop Mikhail (Gribanovsky). Yet he himself had been developing answers to ecclesiological problems for a long time, and presented Khomiakov-Möhler’s concept to the religious-academic environment. Akvilonov did not hide the fact that he borrowed from Khomiakov “the basic view . . . on the essence of Western confessions in general” (Akvilonov 1894, 57). As a result, he came to the definition of the Church as a God-man *organism*, making the following curious argument:

Since there is no other life in experience that is more perfect than organic life, then the Church, the treasury of true life, is nothing but the *organism*. (Akvilonov 1894, 239)

Characteristically, Akvilonov’s thesis, which dates back to Möhler’s Romantic Theology (Akvilonov’s familiarity not only with Khomiakov’s texts, but also with the corresponding German-language literature is proved by the bibliography given in his dissertation), does not correlate in any way with the *Eucharistic* aspect of the apostolic view on the Church as the Body of Christ (“For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread”; 1 Cor. 10:17 KJV). Obviously, what confused the reviewers of the dissertation, which was never approved by the Most Holy Synod, is the uncritical transfer of the concepts of Romantic philosophy to Orthodox theology. After the failure to defend his dissertation, Akvilonov substantially redesigned it, and as a result, the Eucharistic aspect received the necessary coverage (Akvilonov 1896, 60–99). At any rate, in his original text he demonstrated his desire to discard the influence of the Western tradition on the one hand, and tried to express the Orthodox doctrine of the Church in “Western language,” on the other.

The abovementioned Hilarion Troitsky not only gave an enthusiastic characterization of the New Theology, but he himself can be classified as a representative of the younger generation of its protagonists. Focusing his scientific and theological interest in the field of ecclesiology, he, by his own admission, sought first of all to give the ideas of this New Theology a patrological justification (Hilarion 2004b, 2:76) and underwent a rather noticeable evolution in his views. Whereas in his early works Hilarion recognized the importance of the ecclesiological texts of St. Augustine, considering his legacy in the same light as

that of the great Cappadocians (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa), in due course, under the apparent influence of Antony Khrapovitsky, he came to a radical segregation of the Eastern and Western theological traditions (Ilarion 2004a, 3:512). In the face of the need to explain how the conversion of Catholics into the Orthodox Church is possible without rebaptism, he introduced a risky thesis: the very fact of reconciliation with the Church is so significant that “the external rite of baptism performed outside of the Church can turn into the gracious Sacrament” (Ilarion 2004a, 3:526). Characteristically, he justified this thesis with reference to the theological opinion of Khomiakov, who merely expressed, what was, in his opinion, “a constant thought of the Church” (Ilarion 2004a, 3:538). While he represents an apparent direction of confessionalization, he is no longer interested in the philosophical origins of Khomiakov and Antony’s concepts. He accepts the opinions of his teachers as indisputable truths, which require not a critical examination with a view to congruence with the Holy Tradition, but merely an illustration of it (the Sacred Tradition) with texts.

Of course, not all the authors of that time can be included in the theological movement we are considering. The path of the priest Pavel Florensky was quite different from the path of Hilarion Troitsky, for example. Father Pavel was, in the prerevolutionary years, quite critical of Khomiakov’s works; however, earlier, in his dissertation “On the Spiritual Truth: The Experience of Orthodox Theodicy” (an abridged version of his book *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*), following his older contemporaries, he characterized “living religious experience as the only legal way of comprehending the dogmas” peculiar to Orthodoxy, a church-juridical concept of Church life peculiar to Catholics and a church-scientific concept peculiar to Protestants (Florenskii 1916, 12). Actually, his divergence with the theological trend we are considering began when he criticized Western philosophy more consistently than the leading representatives of New Theology, returning to the Platonism of the 19th century.

Conclusions

Although it is not possible within the scope of this article to give an exhaustive overview of the works that would fit more or less into the paradigm of the theological movement under consideration,⁶ let us sum

6. A study of works by I.V. Popov, A.D. Beliaev, A.I. Vvedensky, Archpriest P. Svetlov, and some others would undoubtedly be of interest. In addition, it should be emphasized

up the preliminary results and begin by *separating* the New Theology of the laity from the New Theology of the representatives of theological academies.

The first is a *new* theology, not within the framework of already existing tradition, but in the sense of the *beginning of* a new tradition — the tradition of extra-academic theology. The most important representative of the Russian extra-academic theology of the 19th century was A.S. Khomiakov, who implemented the idea of the new Liubomudrye (philosophy) put forward by Kireevsky: he not only used new philosophical ideas and concepts in order to express the church doctrine, but also set the path toward confessionalization.

The second theology was new in the sense of *transforming* the already existing academic tradition — the transformation that occurred as a result of a mixture of elements of the two traditions — academic and non-academic, which was, of course, in a sense, *a break* with preceding academic tradition. The leaders of this movement were Antony Khrapovitsky and Sergius Stragorodsky.

In this case, we were interested in this new academic (and at the same time anti-academic) theology, which appears in the late 19th to early 20th century. By this time, religious-academic theology had a long tradition of intellectual interaction with German philosophy, the beginning of which can already be distinguished in works of Innokentii of Kherson. This had led academic theology to the Christological and anthropological horizon rather than to the trinitarian-ecclesiological one. But at a certain point the anthropology of the academicians met with the extra-academic ecclesiology of lay theologians, and perceived in the latter not only the idea and pathos of *sobornost'*, but also a particular commitment to the formation of a special Orthodox theological position, an alternative to the Western one.

This leads to the conclusion that the identity of the new academic theology (as well as the theology of the laity) is determined, on the one hand, by the logic of confessionalization, that is, confrontation with the West, and, on the other hand, by the logic of Western philosophy of the modern period. At this point these ideas are being broad-

that a huge corpus of works and ideas of various authors who addressed the topic of Sophiology remains outside the scope of the study. It is true that Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), having criticized the works of Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, named his work *New Teaching about Sofia* (Sofia, 1935). However, Sophiology is not a new doctrine in the same sense as the teachings of the new theologians discussed in the article: the latter did not try to introduce new dogmatic concepts, but aimed primarily to purify the Orthodox tradition of Western ideas.

cast to theology, which has already accumulated a substantial amount of patrological knowledge, and they require the standard operations of scientific theological research: correlations with the texts of Scripture and the Holy Fathers. At the same time, the idea of returning to the Holy Fathers (which was also generated by anti-Westernism), in most cases did not lead to a critical understanding of the theses being defended, since the question of correlation between the philosophical ideas of the Holy Fathers and that of the modern period was not even raised. In other words, the new Liubomudrye proposed by Kireevsky, based on *the model of the Holy Fathers*, appears to have been an attempt to find in the legacy of the ancient Fathers those concepts that arose in the framework of new philosophical paradigms — in the process of confessionalization. And this attempt led to a conscious or unconscious need to correct — *rethink* — the Holy Fathers in cases when they did not correspond to the new ideas.

Thus, Georges Florovsky's statement on the moral and anthropological orientation of the New Theology should be supplemented by a reference not only to the ecclesiological aspect, which is attributable to Khomiakov, but also to a kind of *anti-Western categorical imperative*, which defined this new academic theology no less than the appeal to human experience highlighted by Florovsky. Undoubtedly, Florovsky identified the groundedness of the new theology correctly, but he did not notice the phenomenon of confessionalization within it. Perhaps it was this phenomenon that caused the rupture in the theological tradition, which Florovsky himself did not avoid and which led him to propose the idea of “neopatristic synthesis.”

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