

Chapter 7

Alexander the First

On the cold, brisk morning of December 15, 1777 AD, in St. Petersburg, there suddenly resounded throughout the city the thunderous blast of one hundred and one canons. When the smoke had cleared, there followed the joyous ringing and clanging of Church bells from every steeple in the city. It was a momentous morning. The cannonade and the bells announced the birth of a child born to the Imperial Romanov family, a child who was born to someday become the Emperor of Russia. The child was christened Alexander I.

Alexander was the latest in the line of a new Russian dynasty. The Romanovs had taken over from the Riuryk family when Alexis Romanov, a son of the Metropolitan of Moscow, had acceded to the throne of the Principality of Moscow in the sixteenth century. Together with the dynastic change, the political center of Russia had also shifted. From Moscow it moved northward to the colder climes of St. Petersburg, named after its Romanov founder, Peter the Great.

Alongside the change of political centers, there was also another noticeable change, but this in the spiritual and intellectual climate of Russia. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire to Muslim armies in the fifteenth century, Holy Russia was no longer able to turn southward to Constantinople for standards of Christian Empirical holiness.

It was under the reign of Peter the Great that Russia first began to turn its gaze westward in search for what it hoped would be a more modern and sophisticated model of civilization and progress. The captivating charm of a more secular order of affairs was attracting many European intellectuals and nobles. Becoming especially prominent in its liberalizing influences was the nation of France. Soon the ideals, customs and even the language of France were being adopted by the Russian aristocracy as the very model of culture, chic and sophistication.

At Alexander's birth, the position of France among the nations was that of an incontestable world superpower. Numbering twenty five million citizens, France was the most populous nation in all of Europe. The only other state that could rival the French in

numbers was the Russian which then numbered twenty four million, for the population of England, at that time, numbered only somewhere close to eight million people.

All was not well with France, however. A dark philosophy was beginning to take hold of the country. On July 14, 1789, a Parisian mob stormed the Bastille, an ancient stone prison, and initiated the French Revolution. Events followed quickly one after another. Soon the king of France, Louis XVI was arrested, tried for treason, and in 1793, under the blade of a guillotine was executed at the Place de Concord. A new republic was born and with its first utterance it declared war on its neighbors.

The New Republic began to reorder society according to the principles of its new philosophy – equality, liberty, and fraternity. In the name of equality, it set about abolishing both slavery and the Monarchy, both in France and in the French colonies. In the name of liberty, it instituted a free state education program and expanded the right to vote so as to grant the franchise to more citizens than had ever before enjoyed the privilege. In the name of fraternity, class distinctions were abolished and welfare assistance for the poor was undertaken as a responsibility of the new government.

Despite their angelic appeal, however, this impressive trinity of virtues were themselves allied in rebellion against the most holy Trinity of God. For the seductive power of evil has always been practiced in the form of a masquerade. The scheming art of casting a poisonous and destructive agenda in a most holy and angelic light has been a satanic trademark since the Garden of Eden. As a wolf in sheep's clothing, he always comes with promises of goodness and happiness through which he seeks to blind men to God's better purposes. Integral to the new French philosophy promising wealth, happiness, and prosperity to all, was the premise that all this could be done without God. As a consequence, the experiment ultimately delivered only more enslavement, more poverty, hatred and more misery upon untold misery to an ever growing millions and millions of human lives. For man simply cannot live without God.

The New Republic set out on a deliberate program of making a clean break from the Christian foundations upon which France was built and by which it prospered and became great. Churches were suddenly closed and all Church property officially confiscated. A new calendar was adopted. The Christian tradition of numbering years beginning from the incarnation of the Son of God in Bethlehem was substituted for a

calendar that began its count of years from the first year of the revolution in Paris. The seven-day cycle with one day in seven of rest in commemoration of God Himself resting on the seventh day of creation was exchanged for a ten-day cycle with one day in ten of rest. Laws and decrees were passed attempting to remove any and all traces of the Christian faith from the new state educational system. A new government directive to educational institutions read:

“You must exclude from your teaching all that relates to the dogmas or rites of any religion or sect whatever. The Constitution certainly tolerates them, but the teaching of them is not part of the public instruction, nor can it ever be. The Constitution is founded on the basis of universal morality, and it is this morality of all times, all places, and all religions ... that must be your teaching.”

Only the commandments of God could be for all time and for all places. These, however, were to be replaced by the teachings of man claiming universality independent of God and His will.

A reign of terror suddenly descended upon the people of France. French citizens of the New Republic suspected of opposing the new order were randomly condemned as being enemies of the Revolution and mercilessly killed. The leaders of the revolution, fearing for the very life of the new and still young Republic, believed that the continued existence of the Republic could not be guaranteed until all of France’s neighbors also accepted the philosophy of the New Republic. And so the largest standing army in the history of Europe was recruited able to put to field a troop of eight hundred thousand armed men. In the name of the Revolution, her Generals were sent out abroad as missionaries, promoting the New Republic’s philosophy through conquest and subjugation of other peoples, nations and kingdoms.

The greatest of the new Republic’s missionaries was a young artillery officer of Italian origin who had been studying the science of war since the age of ten. At twenty-four, the Revolution had made him a General in her armies and had given him his first major international mission - the conquest of Italy. In 1796, to his troops before the battle, he wrote:

“Soldiers! You are hungry and naked. The Republic owes you much, but she has not the means to pay her debts. I am come to lead you into the most fertile plains that the sun beholds. Rich provinces, opulent towns, all shall be at your disposal. Soldiers! With such a prospect before you, how can you fail in courage and constancy?”

With luring promises of unbridled revelry, he incited his soldiers to battle.

Having taken half of Italy for the Revolution, he then went on to the land of Egypt. Here was the rising star of the Revolution. The nation took notice and began to look to the brilliant young General for hope and inspiration. The leaders of the Revolution held him up as the greatest champion of their cause.

The young General’s heart, however, was busy dreaming up an even newer philosophy. In a personal letter to a female friend in France, he wrote out his fantasy:

“The time which I passed in Egypt was the most delightful of my life. In Egypt, I found myself free... I dreamed all sorts of things, and I saw how all that I dreamed might be realized. I created a religion. I pictured myself on the road to Asia, mounted on an elephant, with a turban on my head, and in my hand a new Koran, which I should compose according to my own ideas.”

The ancient arts and treasures of the newly conquered domains were taken and exported back to Paris. So were the subdued nations warmly welcomed into the revolution - with forced payments of heavy taxes and the confiscation of their national treasures. Those who opposed the lending of such support were executed.

The young General had unquestionably become the most popular figure of the Revolution. And so, in 1799, the New Republic appointed him to the position of highest political office. In 1804, having earlier deposed and executed her old monarch in the name of liberty and equality, the Revolution enthroned its own new monarch decreeing him Emperor for life. Now the Revolution would be perpetuated not only in France, but in all the conquered territories by his own offspring. He and his dynasty would take the revolution to the uttermost parts of the world. His name was Napoleon Bonaparte.

The young Alexander was the favorite of his grandmother, the Empress Catherine. She had taken over the responsibility of his education, and at the age of six, had decided that it was time to wean him from the care of doting women and into the company of reputable men. For his tutors, among others, Catherine had appointed an English speaking Orthodox priest who had lived and worked in England as well as a French speaking Swiss. Catherine appreciated the priest for his European ways. He wore neither the traditional robes nor the long beard of the Orthodox priesthood. His English suits and clean shaven face made him western, modern, and therefore acceptable in her Majesty's court.

It was to the twenty nine year old Monsieur Frederic Cesar de La Haye from Switzerland, however, that Catherine had entrusted most of the personal instruction of Alexander. She wanted Alexander to learn all that he could of all that was best of what the west had to offer. His education began in earnest in 1783. Soon the young Alexander was speaking better French and English than even his own native Russian.

The educational program Monsieur de La Haye developed for the young Alexander was not instruction in the Christian foundations of Russian civilization, a civilization which had been so dearly preserved through the blood, sweat, and prayers of so many faithful men and women, but an exaltation of French Enlightenment philosophy. They spent their time learning and discussing the ideas of Frenchmen such as Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. The Empress herself had a bust of Voltaire in the Imperial salon and was even in private correspondence with him in France.

Alexander was deeply impressed by the French Enlightenment philosophy. He hoped that some day as Emperor he too could incorporate the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity into Russian society. As for the Christian faith, all that Monsieur de La Haye could tell Alexander about Jesus was that Christ was “*a Jew after whom the Christian sect took its name.*”

After the French revolutionaries had beheaded their very own King, however, shock waves reverberated throughout the kingdoms of Europe. Catherine had the bust of Voltaire removed to the Imperial attic and the person of Monsieur de La Haye dismissed from his office. Fearing what was becoming of the Revolution and its ideals, she recalled all the Russian students studying abroad in France to finish their studies back home in

Russia. What once looked to many as a jewel of European intellectual achievement was suddenly showing itself for what it really was - a dark power and a social cancer seeking to drive not only reigning monarchs, but also the light of God from the minds and hearts of the people of Europe.

The Empress then introduced another person into Alexander's life. Her name was Elisabeth. Alexander was now sixteen years old and after a brief courtship, the two were married. The young and lovely Princess Elisabeth was then only fourteen years old.

In 1797, the Empress Catherine passed away and her firstborn son Paul began his rule. Catherine had thought to side step her own son and have her beloved grandson Alexander take up the rule over Russia after her. There were fears of Paul's inability to rule. But it was to Paul that the reigns of Empire had to rightfully pass.

In 1798, Paul declared war on France and passed a series of laws aimed at curbing the French influence on Russian society. He made it illegal for Russians to dress up in the French fashion outlawing laced shoes, long pants, round top hats, and even the waltz. Russians were forbidden to use the word '*cittoyen*' or citizen, which was a form of address in France that had taken over from the pre-revolutionary custom of addressing people according to their title and rank. Private printing presses were shut down for fear of spreading the dangerous western ideas of the French revolution.

By 1801, a small group of senior officials and military officers were convinced that for the good of Russia, it was necessary for Alexander to take over his father's throne as soon as possible. Paul was seen as eccentric, mentally unstable, reactionary. Alexander hesitated over their proposal to depose his own father but eventually gave his tacit consent to their plans providing that his father would not be injured in any way. The conspirators, encouraged by Alexander's acquiescence, came upon Paul one evening, bursting into his palace bedroom, and there, while Alexander slept in the room below, murdered the Emperor of Russia. In the news, the Emperor was reported as having died in his sleep. It was under these circumstances that the distraught young Alexander ascended onto the throne of Russia in the year of our Lord 1801.

Napoleon sent a General of the French Revolutionary Army to congratulate Alexander on his ascendancy to his father's throne. The young Emperor Alexander, addressing the elderly General as '*cittoyen*', welcomed and thanked him for the visit.

Alexander had big plans for Russia. Eager to reform Russia according to the western philosophical principles he had learned and come to admire under the tutelage of Monsieur de La Haye, Alexander began first by overturning all his father's anti-French laws.

Alexander thought of giving liberty to the millions of Russian serfs who were suffering under conditions of virtual slavery. He wanted to introduce democracy to the administration of government through an elected senate and have the nation governed under the auspices of a constitution. He established a system of Ministries, whose ministers were his own personal appointees, forming a cabinet administering the affairs of the Russian Empire. One of his appointees was the young Prince Galitsyn, to whom he entrusted the post of Minister of Spiritual Affairs.

For all the idealism that filled his mind and heart, Alexander found that there was still something missing in his life. On the political home front, Alexander's intended reforms were stalled. As husband and father, his home life was beginning to take on a tragic quality. His wife Elisabeth had been unfaithful to him and he too had taken up an affair with another woman. His first-born daughter died in infancy. Disgusted with each other, Alexander and Elisabeth had agreed to give each other liberty in their married lives. After meeting her husband's lover, who was pregnant with Alexander's child, Elisabeth wrote home to her mother: "***The Emperor is the first to ridicule virtuous behavior and makes remarks on this subject that are really revolting on the lips of the man who should be the guardian of order, the guardian of morality...***"

On the international scene, Alexander was greatly disappointed with the new leader of the French Revolution. Alexander entered into an alliance with the monarchs of Europe – with Frederic William III, the king of Prussia, and with Francis I, the king of Austria, each pledging one another military allegiance against the French army. Refusing to call Napoleon anything but "General Bonaparte", Alexander wrote to his old tutor, Monsieur de La Haye: "***I have revised my opinion of the First Consul. Since he became Consul for life, the veil has fallen from him, and since then things have gone from bad to worse...now he is one of the most famous tyrants that history has produced.***" Alexander was preparing for the possibility of war.

In 1805, the armies of Napoleon met the combined armies of Austria and Russia at the battle of Austerlitz. There Napoleon decisively smashed the combined allied armies and went on to capture the city of Vienna. The Monarchs themselves were sent scurrying on horseback from Austerlitz through the midnight dark of towns and villages narrowly avoiding capture.

Although radiant and aglow from his latest round of victories, Napoleon was not content. There could be no peace as long as there was someone who could challenge his authority. After the battle, as the thirty-six year old Napoleon stayed up late into the night pondering how best to redraw the boundaries of Europe, fancifully imagining himself the new Emperor not only of all Europe, but of the entire world, Alexander made his return to St. Petersburg. There he visited the Kazan Church and after a deep sigh he knelt down and prayed.

In 1807, Napoleon suggested to Alexander a meeting to establish a peace treaty. Alexander agreed and the two met on a barge on the Nieman River at Tilsit, on the border between Russia and Europe. There they agreed to follow the ‘Continental System’ by which Russia would no longer do trade with the English, who were Napoleon’s staunchest enemies. Although eighty percent of Russia’s trade was with England, Alexander agreed to the terms. Somewhat frightened by the seemingly undefeatable foe, Alexander thought he may be contained through a course of appeasement. For the first time, Alexander and Napoleon became personally acquainted.

A conversation was overheard between two Russian villagers regarding the meeting at Tilsit. *“How could our Blessed Father, the Orthodox Tsar have allowed himself to agree with the accursed anti-Christ? Isn’t it a great sin?”* one asked. *“I’m surprised you don’t understand, dear brother,”* answered the other, *“don’t you know that they met on the river. It was because our Father had Bonaparte baptized first before he allowed Bonaparte to join him in the raft otherwise how could Bonaparte stand before the pure eyes of his most holy Majesty”*.

A few years later, Alexander and Napoleon had another meeting at Erfurt, in Germany. Napoleon hinted that he was divorcing his wife Josephine, who had two children from a previous marriage, but none with Napoleon and that he would like to accept Alexander’s sister as his bride.

“What a miserable existence the child would have united to a scoundrel to whom nothing is sacred and who knows no restraint because he does not even believe in God,” cried Alexander’s mother. ***“What would she see, what would she hear in that school of wickedness and vice?”*** Alexander answered Napoleon as diplomatically as he was able explaining to him that if he wanted to win the young lady’s heart, he must first win her mother’s. Napoleon, however, would discover that it was easier to conquer Europe than to gain the respect of the Russian royal family.

On June 24, 1812, beneath a beautiful clear blue sky spotted only with small white wisps of cloud, Napoleon once again found himself standing on the shores of the Nieman River. Looking out across the river and onto the land of Russia, he stood at the fore of an army of over half a million soldiers. Taking a deep breath, he raised the signal for his army to move. Setting off across the river, Napoleon began his invasion of the Russian Empire.

In entering Russia, he picked a strategic point that was right between two large standing Russian armies and so was able to quickly advance inland unhindered. The Russian armies were forced to retreat and meet up again further back inland where they could put up a united front against Napoleon’s overwhelming army. But the French army was proving itself once again unstoppable. Its proud advance was deliberate, premeditated and urgent. Napoleon had his eye set on only one thing - Moscow.

Alexander personally rushed to Moscow. Inside the Kremlin, a solemn Church service was being held. The Kremlin bishops encouraged the Tsar: ***“God is with you. Through your voice, He will command the tempest, and calm will return, the waves of deluge will subside.”*** The city was brought to a standstill uncertain of what lay ahead. The Governor of Moscow summoned all Muscovites to a solemn outdoor prayer vigil on the Kremlin Square. The life of Russia was once again being threatened and her people were once again taking their refuge in God.

Upon returning to St. Petersburg, Alexander grew frustrated with his minister of Spiritual affairs. ***“How can you sit there so smug, when the enemy is right at our doorstep?”*** he asked the Prince.

Prince Golitsyn was brought up, like Alexander, inspired by western philosophical ideals. The two were of one mind and of one spirit when Alexander

entrusted the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs to the Prince. Alexander knew that he could trust the Prince to chart as rational and European a course as he himself would chart for the affairs of his Ministry.

When the Prince took over the Ministry that oversaw the affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, he decided that it was time to finally read the Bible for himself and see exactly what sort of spiritual affairs he was supposed to be a minister of. A remarkable change of character had come upon the Prince as he read the through Bible. As he read and as he believed in the testimony the Holy Scriptures gave to the reality and power of the risen Lord he became born again.

Now with the anxious Alexander standing before him asking about his calmness, the Prince directed Alexander to the source of his peace and strength. In response to Alexander's question, the Prince asked, "***Have you ever read the Gospels?***" "***Bits and pieces in Church services***" the Tsar answered, "***but not wholly. No.***" The Prince then gave him a Bible and advised him to read the Gospels. Only then, he assured him, would he understand how one could still have such peace, though all around everything, even the world itself, seemed to be crumbling. Soon the two men would be sharing the closest of spiritual ties experiencing the brotherhood that comes through wholehearted devotion and service to the same one and only God.

Alexander accepted the Bible the Prince gave him. While traveling through Finland mobilizing the Russian troops stationed there to return to Russia, he began to read it. He read the Gospels. Then he read the Acts of the Apostles. Then he turned to the Epistles of Paul. He could not read enough. He turned to the book of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Chronicles, Psalms. The book was too short. He wanted more! He had finally found the desire of his heart. The way out of his greatest personal trial suddenly became clear.

In a memo to the Prince, Alexander wrote, "***This book which you put into my hands has opened a new world before my eyes. I am very much obliged to you for the advice which you gave me.***" As Alexander read the Bible, the French army advanced.

The Russian army had set up a defense of Moscow at Borodino, some one hundred kilometers west of Moscow. There the two armies clashed. The French eventually broke through but at a loss of some forty thousand soldiers. The Russian

losses stood at fifty thousand men killed in action. Pulling back, the Russian army encamped south of the city awaiting Napoleon's next move.

Napoleon's army was now marching unhindered into Moscow. Expecting to find in Moscow a glittering trophy of their triumph, the French army found instead an evacuated city set aflame.

Winter was approaching as Napoleon looked over the smoldering ruins of his charred and deserted kingdom. The jewel of his conquest was an empty and hollow victory. He thought the people of Russia would receive him as their deliverer from tyranny and oppression and welcome him with open arms. But the people of Russia saw through his façade and recognized him for who he really was - a tyrant seeking his own glory and their enslavement. The only sounds coming from the Moscow Churches were the neighing of the French army's horses, now stabled there. After one month in a burned out and deserted Moscow, Napoleon decided that he had had enough. It was time for him to return to Europe.

It was during that winter in 1812 that Alexander had finally heard the calling of God and found his life mission. Responding to a letter from another member of his cabinet, he replied ***“Do not think that my faith dates from these past days. I have been seeking this path now for several years...Pray to the Lord to give me the necessary power to finish my work for the nation, to make my country happy, but not in the vulgar sense; I stake all my glory on advancing the true kingdom of Jesus Christ”***

The French forces were ordered to leave Russia. It was now a devastated and demoralized French army straggling across the Nieman River enroute back to Europe. Of the over one half million soldiers who had invaded Russia with Napoleon, only some forty thousand soldiers remained to complete the retreat.

Now that Napoleon had been driven out of Russia, it was not enough that he should be allowed free reign in Europe, thought Alexander. In a letter to Monsieur de La Haye, Alexander explained why Napoleon needed not only to be opposed but also stopped and deposed: ***“To submit oneself to the genius of evil means to enforce his power, to place in his hands a tool for the construction of a tyranny much worse than the previous one. It is necessary to have the bravery to fight him. And with God's help,***

through unity and perseverance, we shall reach a happy outcome. This is my conviction.”

Alexander was now leading the Russian army in pursuit of Napoleon. In April of 1813, the Russian army had reached Poland. Crossing through Poland, they stood at the German border. There Alexander rallied his troops: ***“We are fighting for faith against atheism, for freedom against tyranny, for humanity against barbarism!”*** he declared. Alexander had discovered his life’s calling.

Alexander once again joined up with the Prussian army of king Frederic William III and together their armies rallied for a big battle. At Bautzen they met Napoleon. The armies clashed. Alexander and William watched from the hilltops. Through their binoculars, across the smoky battlefield they could see the figure of Napoleon standing in his gray trench coat and large top hat. Although Napoleon was on the run, he would not give up without a fight. At Bautzen, the allies were defeated and once again forced to retreat to safety.

Riding in the retreat together, the Prussian king turned to Alexander. In a sullen tone, he spoke to him as to a fellow king, and also as to, what he had come to recognize, a fellow servant to the King of kings: ***“Really, I expected something else. We hoped to march west, and here we are retreating east. If the Lord wants to crown our common efforts, we should confess before the world that it is to Him alone that the glory of success belongs.”***

There soon followed the battle of Dresden. It was there that Alexander witnessed the death of a French General Moureau who had just crossed over from the French to the Russian side and was giving priceless and invaluable advice on how best to defeat Napoleon. The two were on a hill overlooking the battle when Alexander had noticed that his horse kept nervously stomping the protruding rocky plateau on which it was standing. Alexander had just reeled the horse back a few yards from off of the rocky protrusion when General Moureau, having moved in to the exact spot just vacated by Alexander, was suddenly thrown off his horse by an exploding canon ball.

The General was seriously wounded and his legs needed to be amputated. The shock, however, was too severe and by the next day, the French General was dead. In a letter to Prince Golitsyn, Alexander wrote: ***“This event, while it leaves bitter regret for***

the person of the General, has produced no other effect on me than to strengthen my belief that God reserves to himself alone the task of directing everything and that my confidence in Him is stronger than in all the Moureuas on earth.”

Austria had now joined in an alliance with Russia and Prussia and soon England would also be joining in on this union against Napoleon. On October 16, 1813, the allied armies rallied and once again clashed with Napoleon at the battle of Leipzig. Three hundred sixty thousand allied troops went up against a French force of one hundred eighty five thousand. The numbers were overwhelming and the French were routed.

Napoleon was forced to leave Germany and retreat across the Rhine River back into France. In another dispatch to Golitsyn, Alexander relayed how victory was won: *“After a battle of four days under the walls of Leipzig, God has granted us a brilliant victory over this famous Napoleon.”*

The allied armies were once again in pursuit. Soon they would be entering the very land that gave birth to all their troubles. Before leading his army onto French territory, on December 25, 1813 Alexander issued this Christmas message to his Russian troops:

“Soldiers! We are crossing the boundaries of the land with which we are engaged in bloody and cruel war. We have already saved our fatherland and covered it with glory, and we have restored to Europe her freedom and independence. May calm and tranquility be established over the whole earth! May faith, language, sciences, arts, and trade flourish in every country for the general welfare of all the peoples! Such is our intention, and not the continuation of war and ruin. Entering into the heart of our country the enemies have done us much harm, but they also suffered dire punishment. They were scourged by the wrath of God. Let us not be like them: inhumanity and brutality cannot please God, who loves mankind. Let us forget their deeds, let us carry to them not anger and vengeance, but friendliness and a hand stretched out for reconciliation. It is the glory of the Russians to

overthrow the armed enemy and, after wresting the arms from his hand, to be charitable to him and his peaceful brothers. This we are taught by the Orthodox faith, which we cherish in our hearts. With Divine words it speaks to us – love your enemies and do kindness to those who hate you...

The chase was on. Alexander stood at the head of the allied armies entering France. He was determined not to rest until Napoleon's power was no more. The armies reached the town of Sommeny where they encamped. In the chambers of the local town hall, the kings and generals held a war council to decide their next step. "*Should we pursue Napoleon himself, or march on Paris?*" Relating what happened next in another dispatch to Golitsyn, Alexander wrote: "*In the depths of my heart I had a kind of vague feeling of expectation, the overwhelming desire to entrust everything to the complete discretion of God. The council was still in session. I left it for a moment to go to my room. There my knees bent of themselves and I poured out my whole heart to the Lord!*" *The choice became suddenly clear – Paris!*"

The capital city of Europe, from which Alexander as a youth had acquired all his ideals and principles of philosophy, the city to which he once trusted and turned to for instruction, inspiration and enlightenment now stood before him as the final object of his conquest. What once seemed to shine so bright as the light of Europe and hold out so much hope for Russia and the nations now stood condemned as a witch and a villain whose charlatanry and corruption had been exposed and to whom justice was now due.

The allied armies assembled one hundred thousand armed men outside the gates of Paris ready for battle. The battle for Paris commenced. Before the sun would set that day, six thousand Russian lives would be sacrificed for the capture of the city. The Parisians surrendered and the capitulation of Paris was accepted at an out door café called "La Petit Jardinnet" – "The Little Gardenette". On the next day, Alexander, accompanied by Frederic William III and the Emperor Francis, triumphantly rode into the city at the head of the allied armies. Unexpected cheers resounded throughout the city as the Parisians joyfully greeted the arrival of the Monarchs!

Alexander explained to the people of Paris that his enemy was not France, but rather Napoleon. In a letter home to his mother, Alexander wrote, ***“If there was one thing I am pleased about, it is the way in which God has permitted it to be done, that is, that we came not as conquerors, or enemies, but as friends!”***

Among the allied armies to enter Paris were the Cossack regiments of whom the Parisians did not know what to think. Rugged men, wearing beards and mustaches, they stationed themselves in the central park along the Champ-Elysees. There they opened their tents, hung out their laundry, gathered around bonfires, and slept with sabers at their sides and heads resting upon their leather saddles.

The French Empire’s Senate had met and in an emergency session resolutely voted to repudiate the authority of their Emperor Napoleon. Napoleon answered the will of his Senate with an abdication of his position. Alexander’s work was almost done.

It was Easter, 1814, and Alexander issued a directive to the Russian army then occupying Paris:

***“His Imperial Majesty hopes and believes that throughout Holy Week, no Russian officer will allow himself to defy the rules of the Church by going to the theater. Any Russian who attends performances will be immediately brought to the attention of His Imperial majesty
Tsar Alexander.”***

During Easter, an outdoor worship service was held in Paris on the Place de la Concorde. Alexander sent a glowing report of it to Golitsyn in St. Petersburg: ***“It was a solemn, moving, awesome moment for my heart having led my Orthodox warriors from the depths of their cold Nordic homelands to the very spot where the royal victim succumbed to public fury...It was as if the sons of the North were performing the funeral rites of the king of France. Our spiritual triumph achieved its fill effect. I was even amused to see the French Marshals and Generals pushing and shoving to kiss the Russian cross.”***

While in Paris, Alexander often met with a group of Christians and interested guests at the home of Madam Julie von Krudener. Madam Krudener was born in Riga

and had been the wife of the Russian Imperial Ambassador to Berlin. She had married the ambassador at the age of eighteen and had shamefully abandoned her husband for a young French military officer a few years later. After a number of years away she returned home to her husband and then only to bury him shortly thereafter. Upon Mr. Krudener's death, Madame Julie was left alone with her two children.

But in 1804, at forty years old, while visiting a cobbler to have a pair of shoes made for herself, and noticing a certain radiance upon the cobbler's face, she asked, "***Are you happy?***" to which he replied, "***I am happy since my life has been changed by faith in Jesus Christ.***" Shortly after that, the same radiance began to shine in Madame Krudener's face as she too found peace for her soul through the same wonderful wonder working faith in Jesus Christ.

In a letter to an old friend in Paris, she was able to write, "***I go like a little child to be enlightened and consoled, to rejoice and to confide in my merciful Savior... When I feel myself under the influence of sin, of temptations to vanity, of a foolish longing to shine before the eyes of men, I go to Him and beg him to cure me and then my soul is released from all worldly passions.***"

As a Christian, Madam Krudener began to revisit many of the aristocratic salons of Europe she had once frequented in order to share her experiences of new found faith and joy. The lady-in-waiting to the Empress Elisabeth, Mrs. Sturdza, was a friend and confidant of Madame Krudener's and it was through Mrs. Sturdza that Alexander first heard of Julie.

Madam Krudener, who had followed the trail of Alexander's armies across Europe in his campaign against Napoleon was now Alexander's special guest sitting alongside the victorious Emperors of Europe reviewing the march past of the Russian Armies at the Field Of Virtues some one hundred kilometers east of Paris. The Generals and Monarchs of Europe were all in attendance curiously noticing the gentle lady in simple attire wearing a simple straw hat sitting beside the Emperor of Russia who had just defeated Napoleon.

The day following the parade, a solemn assembly was called. Seven communion tables were placed on the field and the Eucharist was administered by the officiating

Orthodox Priests to all the Armies, Kings, and Generals of Europe. As all knelt upon bended knee, prayers and thanksgiving were solemnly offered. The war was over.

Alexander issued a manifesto: ***“Thus the All Mighty has put an end to our unhappiness, has illuminated our country in the eyes of future generations, and has granted the wishes of our heart. In addressing to heaven fervent and respectful prayers of thanks to the Author of all good, we order that solemn thanksgiving shall be returned throughout the length and breadth of our Empire. We are convinced that Russia, on her knees before the throne of the Eternal One, will pour out tears of joy.”***

Although Alexander was exposed to and influenced very early in his life by French philosophy, throughout his adulthood he met with and was influenced by Christians from various confessions. Apart from the Christian presence in his cabinet and in his palace, Alexander met with many European Christians. In Finland and Germany, he had attended Lutheran Church services. It was to a German pastor in particular to whom Alexander confessed, ***“The burning of Moscow at last illumined my spirit and the judgment of God filled me with a warmth of faith I had never felt before. From that moment, I learned to know God such as He is revealed by the Bible. From that moment I tried to comprehend, as I now do comprehend, His wish and His law. From that time I became another man...”***

Both in London and again in St Petersburg, Alexander personally met with English Quakers. In one of their memorable meetings, Alexander suggested that they all pray together. At the conclusion of their meeting tears were streaming down the Emperor’s cheeks: ***“When I am with you, and such as you,”*** Alexander confessed, warmly pressing their hands, ***“I can breathe.”***

Europe was now at peace. Napoleon, the tyrant of Europe, was in exile. After a long and drawn out war, everyone was ready to return home. But no sooner had one hundred days passed, than Napoleon escapes his exile and returns to Europe at the head of a new French army. Another round of battle. The armies met at Waterloo, and once again the canons roared, the muskets blasted, and the sabers clashed. This time it was the work of the English Duke of Wellington that finally and decisively crushed the schemes and plans of Napoleon Bonaparte forever.

After all was over, Alexander, Frederic William III, and Francis came together at the initiative of Alexander to sign a treaty forming the Holy Alliance. The text of the treaty read:

“In the Name of the Most Holy and Indivisible Trinity:

Their Majesties, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia,

in consequence of the great events that have marked the course of the last three years in Europe, and especially in consequence of the blessings it has pleased Divine Providence to shower down upon those states that place their confidence and their hope in Him alone, convinced of the necessity of subjecting the policies to be observed by the powers, in their reciprocal relations, to the sublime truths taught by the divine law of God, our Savior,

Solemnly declare that the present act has no other object than to publish in the face of the whole world, their fixed resolution to take for their sole guide in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, the precepts of the Holy religion, namely the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace, which, far from being applicable only to private life, must have an immediate influence on the will of monarchs and guide all their steps, being the only means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections.

In consequence, Their majesties have agreed on the following articles:

Art I - ...

Art II ... Whether between the said governments or between their subjects... To consider themselves as members of one and the same Christian nation; inasmuch as the three allied Princes look upon themselves as namely delegated by Providence to govern three branches of the same family, namely Austria, Prussia, and Russia, thus confessing that the Christian world, of which they and their people form a part, has in reality, no other Sovereign than Him to Whom alone power really belongs, inasmuch as in Him alone are found all the treasures of love, knowledge, and infinite wisdom, that is to say, God, our Divine Savior, Jesus Christ, the Word of the Most High, the Word of Life. Their majesties consequently entreat their subjects, with the most tender solicitude, to strengthen themselves every day more and more in the principles and conscientious exercise of the duties which the Divine Savior has taught mankind, as the sole means of enjoying that peace which arises from a good conscience and which alone is durable.

Art III - ...

Signed in Paris, the year of Grace 1815, September 14/26

Francis

Frederick William

Alexander”

Alexander pledged that *“I shall never separate myself from the Monarchs to whom I am united...What need have I to increase my Empire? God has not put eight hundred thousand soldiers under my orders to satisfy my ambition, but to protect religion, morality, and justice, and make principles of order, upon which human society rests, reign.”*

Upon his return home, Alexander was filled with a new energy, a new hope, a new vision for the people of Russia. He hoped to reestablish Christian faith, character and culture throughout his Empire as the basis of ordinary Russian life.

On New Years day 1816, the Emperor published a declaration, which included the following reminder concerning the recent events:

“... But the very greatness of these deeds indicates that it was not solely our work. For their completion, God had given His strength to our feeble hands, His wisdom to our ignorance, His foresight to our blindness. What shall we choose, pride or humility? Our pride would be unjust, ungrateful, criminal before the One who poured on us such great benefits. It would place us on the same level as those whom we deposed.”

Alexander did not forget his old friends. When he was informed that Madam Krudener was experiencing hostilities from the Governor of Riga, Marquis Palucci, he defended her character before the Governor, writing to him: *“Why disturb the tranquility of people who are only concerned with praying to the Eternal and who do no harm to anyone? Leave Madam von Krudener and the others in peace, for what does it matter to you if a particular person prays to God in one fashion or another? In that regard, each acts according to his conscience and is responsible only to Him. It is better to pray in any way, than not to pray at all. Tsar Alexander. ”*

While away in Europe, Alexander approved of the formation of a Russian Bible Society. In a letter to his Minister of Spiritual Affairs, Prince Golitsyn, he wrote: *“Your last letter, in which you told me of the opening of the Bible Society interested and moved me. May the Most High bestow His benediction upon this institution. I attach the greatest significance to it...In general, this common tendency toward drawing*

nearer to Christ the Redeemer is a real pleasure for me. You may have at your disposal all monetary means for the printing of the Bible.”

Alexander regarded the Bible as the perfect means of introducing the people of Russia to their Savior, Jesus Christ. He understood that there was religion and that there was faith and that the first did not necessarily imply the second. He knew first hand that adherence to a collection of man-made ceremonies did not amount to a real faith relationship of trust and obedience in the living God through His Son Jesus Christ. Alexander hoped and prayed that the people of Russia could truly come to know Christ as he himself had come to know Him through the reading of the Holy Scriptures. In a letter to his sister Catherine, Alexander explained his understanding of the difference between religion and faith: *“At present, as ever, there is a visible and an invisible Church. The foundation in the teaching of both Churches is the same – the Bible. But the first one knows only its text, whereas the second knows Him of Whom the text speaks.”*

In 1816, under Alexander’s blessing, the Russian Bible, printed in the language of the Russian vernacular, underwent mass publication for the first time in history. By 1818, the Russian Bible Society had published three hundred and seventy one thousand Bibles in seventy-nine editions and twenty-five different languages and Russian dialects.

That same year, Alexander decided to expand Prince Golitsyn’s Ministry to include the Ministry of Education. An Imperial memo stated the reasoning behind the amalgamation: *“Desiring that Christian piety always be the foundation of true education, we affirm the fruitfulness of uniting the Affairs of the Ministry of Education with the Affairs of the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs into a single administration.”* Daily reading of the Bible was re-affirmed as an important and crucial part of every school curriculum. Universities were re-examined and purged of faculty who were irreligious or impious. Alexander wanted to ensure that the youth of Russia, even if they chose not to accept and follow the faith, could at least be honestly exposed to the Christian foundations of their civilization.

A Committee within the new Ministry, was formed entrusted with establishing *“a salutary harmony among faith, science, and authority of the state”*. In a decree issued by the committee, it was ordered that any and all such writings *“which contradict the Christian faith,”* including *“vain conjectures about the formation of the earth,”* and

medical treatises, which ignore or otherwise insufficiently address “*man’s spiritual nature*” and the “*Providence of God*” were to be immediately withdrawn from circulation. In 1822, Alexander also acted to ban the meeting of secret societies, such as the Masons, and other harmful non-Christian organizations for their destructive anti-Christian influences on the people of Russia.

Despite his international victories and his national popularity, Alexander’s home and family life had been a sad and tragic one. His wife, the Empress Elisabeth was childless. The couple was living in separate quarters. His only child, Sophie, who suddenly passed away at the age of eighteen while engaged to be married was born to his mistress, Madam Naryshkin.

Alexander regretfully acknowledged the horrible sin of his earlier lifestyle and confessed the deception under which he justified it: “*I imagined, no doubt wrongly as I now clearly perceive, that since convention had united my wife and myself without our own doing, we were free in the eyes of God, though bound to each other in the eyes of man. My rank obliged me to respect convention, but I believed I was free to give my heart where I wished.*”

It was after the burning of Moscow and his turning to Christ that Alexander ceased relations with his mistress. Regarding her visit to St. Petersburg in 1813, Alexander wrote to his confidante Prince Koshelev:

“*My faith is zealous and pure,...I cannot defer saying a word about the arrival of Madam Naryshkin in St. Petersburg. I hope you know my present state too well to harbor the least anxiety about me in that connection. Besides, even if I had still been a man of the world, it would have taken no special virtue on my part to remain completely aloof from this person, after everything that has happened on her side.*

Yours, heart and soul in our Divine Master, Alexander.”

Near the end of his reign, Alexander saw that it was not possible to completely exclude the influence of seductive western philosophies from the people of Russia. When a Russian General approached him regarding matters of further suppressing the propagation of those ideas, Alexander responded: “*You have been in my service since the commencement of my reign. You know that I have shared and encouraged those*

illusions and those errors. It is not my place to repress them.” If Alexander could not suppress the false ideas he once so eagerly believed in, he did all he could to ensure that the truth of the Christian faith could be freely and publicly taught throughout his Empire.

Near the end of his life Alexander and Elisabeth were reconciled to each other. The two began to spend more time together, reading the Bible, and praying together. Alexander died in 1825 in the Crimea where he had gone for a vacation with Elisabeth for the sake of her health. He was forty-eight years old.