

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

God and Passion

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I was in crisis and went looking for a priest, a pastor, a guide—someone who could help me work out my calling in a most uncongenial setting. I felt beleaguered. I needed help.

I made several attempts at finding a mentor among the living, without success. Then I found Fyodor Dostoevsky. I cannot now remember how I hit on him, for I had no previous acquaintance. An inspired hunch, maybe. A whim that turned lucky.

I took my appointments calendar and wrote in two hour meetings with FD three afternoons a week. Over the next seven months I read through the entire corpus, some of it twice. From three to five o'clock on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday I met with FD in my study and had leisurely conversations through *Crime and Punishment*, *Notes from the Underground*, *The Idiot*, *A Raw Youth*, *The Devils*, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. All winter long, through the spring, and a month or two into the summer I hid away in my study reading Penguin paperbacks. I spent those afternoons with a man for whom God and passion were integral—and integrated.

My crisis had come when I realized that I was living in a place where God and passion were only marginal, and I sensed subtle but insistent pressures to displace them in myself. But if God and passion became marginal, I would not be myself: I would not be a writer; I would not be a pastor. Writer and Pastor were the twin strands of a vocational identity that had been formed by God and passion.

The crisis took place in a Maryland cornfield fast being overlaid with asphalt: classic American suburbia. Sent there to organize a new church, I was a pastor without a congregation. I was also a writer, but unpublished. I found to my surprise that God and passion, far from being assets in publishing and parish ministry, as I had naively supposed, were impediments. There was no market for who I was, no job that fit my vocation.

And then the crisis was over. Thanks to Dostoevsky, God and passion would never again be at risk, at least vocationally. The God-passionate lives of Sonja, Prince Myshkin, Alyosha, and Father Zossima furnished my imagination with living images.

My first real find in Dostoevsky was Prince Myshkin, "The Idiot." At the time I was looking for something that I later learned to name "vocational holiness," and the Prince enlarged my imagination to grasp what it might be.

How do I make a difference? The world is a mess, in need of massive overhaul. People are living in spiritual impoverishment and moral squalor and material confusion. Somebody has to do something. I have to do something. Where do I start?

What does it mean to represent the Kingdom of God in a culture devoted to the Kingdom of Self? How do delicate, vulnerable, fragile words survive in competition with money and guns and bulldozers? How do pastors, who don't make anything happen, maintain a robust identity in a society that pays its top dollar to country singers, drug lords, oil barons? All around me I saw men and women hammering together a vocational identity from models given to them from the "principalities and powers." The models all were strong on power (making things happen) and image (appearing important). But none of them seemed congruent with the calling I sensed forming within myself. But what actually should this unformed aspiration look like, vocationally? Prince Myshkin was Dostoevsky's contribution to my quest.

In *The Idiot*, Prince Myshkin strikes everyone who meets him as simple and naive. He gives the impression of not knowing how the world works. People assume that he has no experience of the complexities of society. He is innocent of the "real world." An idiot.

The St. Petersburg society he enters, as portrayed by Dostoevsky, is trivial and superficial. Pretense and pose are epidemic among these people, who rate each other by how much money they possess, what kind of family they come from, who they know: "...empty-headed people who, in their smugness, did not realize themselves that much of their excellence was just a veneer, for which they were not responsible, for they acquired it unconsciously and by inheritance." The Prince is admitted into their drawing rooms, cautiously, only because of the possibility that he might be connected with nobility. But he is suspect from the start. Ignorant of the importance of names and station, he obviously doesn't fit.

And then gradually, without anyone knowing quite how it happens, the Prince becomes the central person for these empty-headed, obsessive lives, mad for recognition or sex or money. Although he associates easily with them, he stays curiously free of their obsessions. Various characters latch on to him in order to use him. But he is not usable. He simply is. He is not good for anything; he is simply good. In the midst of the furious machinations by which men and women are striving to get their own way, he emerges as one who is significant simply in his humanity. People find themselves approaching him for counsel, attracted to this strange man, hardly knowing why they are pulled to him like filings to a magnet. They have no vocabulary for the phenomenon.

The silent source of the Prince's detachment is that he has no personal agenda. The most powerful emotional figure in the novel, Nastasya Fillipovna, excites powerful emotions—ranging darkly from vituperative scorn to animalistic lust—in all who meet her. All except Prince Myshkin. He simply loves her, respects her, maybe even understands her. His own needs don't clog up the relationship. Nastasya is a Mary Magdalene figure, a devil-afflicted, society-exploited woman who gets a chance at love and salvation through the person of Prince Myshkin. She doesn't, in the end, embrace it; but she has her chance, and even in rejection she is accepted and loved by the Prince.

I began to realize what Dostoevsky was doing in the person of Prince Myshkin. The society in which Dostoevsky lived was... his values changed by pettiness and social obsession.

None of these people did real work; they were parasites on the vast peasantry who worked the fields. But on the edge were small pockets of intellectuals seething with energies for reform—young intellectuals who wanted to tear down the rotten structure of czar and bureaucracy and church and build a pure and just society. The rebels, comprising both anarchists and socialists, sometimes disagreed on methods, but were united in the conviction that God was best left out, and that any means, even murder, was justified in order to achieve the new order.

For anyone sickened by the complacent, corrupt society of nineteenth century Russia, the attraction of the radical revolutionaries was powerful. And Dostoevsky himself had once been attracted. He dabbled with their ideas; he joined their groups. Finally, he was arrested and sent to Siberian exile.

The labor camp, which should have radicalized him forever, did not. Or rather, it radicalized him in a counter-radical way. In the early days of imprisonment he was visited by a remarkable woman, Natalya Fonvizina, who made the sign of the cross over him and gave him a New Testament. Dostoevsky spoke later of having read and re-read the New Testament in his Siberian prison camp. "It lay under my pillow for four years during penal servitude. I read it sometimes, and read it to others. With it, I taught one convict to read." Instead of pursuing the anarchist and socialist utopias that were all the rage, he dug to the root, to the cross of Christ.

He returned from ten years of Siberian exile and, instead of pouring himself into atheistic and social engineering endeavors, spent the rest of his life creating characters who would enter society and change it by means of holiness. The vocational question for anyone disgusted with society and wanting to do something about it for the better centers on means—*how* do I go about it? Is it to be guns or grace? Dostoevsky created a series of characters, fools for Christ like Prince Myshkin and Alyosha (of *The Brothers Karamazov*) who chose grace.

Being in the company of Prince Myshkin has little to do with morality—doing and saying what is right. It has to do with beauty and goodness. These cannot be known in abstraction, for they only occur in living, loving persons. They cannot be observed, only encountered. The Prince provides *encounter*.

For most of us, the desire for beauty and the good proves infinitely frustrating, for we are mainly aware of what we are not. When we *do* things well, we get satisfaction. When we *are* well (holy) we are unconscious of it and so get no satisfaction, at least not in the sense of ego gratification. And since mostly we are *not* well (unholy), we live with a deep sense of inadequacy. The only reason we continue to aspire to holiness is that the alternative is so insipid.

A few people in every generation are prepared to enter into society with the intent of healing or reforming or instructing. I certainly thought I was. I came out of a faith which encouraged this approach. I worked from a text that promised that all things could be made new, and that introduced such life-altering words as Repent, Be Baptized, and Take Up Your Cross.

As a young pastor, I had little patience with pietism—fussy devotional practices that separated its practitioners into conclaves of self-righteousness. I was bored with moralism—bromidic *Reader's Digest* counsels on how to live safe and sound.

But what vocational shape should these energies take on? All the models I had were either managerial or messianic. Prince Myshkin offered a different model. Such a vocation equips one not so much for getting things done as for submitting to reality. "You know," said Prince Myshkin, "in my opinion, it's sometimes quite a good thing to be absurd. Indeed, it's much better; it makes it so much easiest to forgive each other and to humble ourselves. One can't start straight with perfection! To attain perfection, one must first of all be able not to understand many things. For if we understand things too quickly, we may perhaps fail to understand them well enough."

I now reflect: Who are the people who have made a difference in my life? Answer: The ones who weren't trying to make a difference. Prince Myshkin alerted me to notice other persons who communicated a love, a beauty, a holiness. In their presence it would occur to me, "That's the way I want to live. I wonder if it might be possible to be that kind of person? And I wonder if this could be worked out not only personally, but vocationally?"

Being a writer and being a pastor are virtually the same thing for me: an entrance into chaos, the *mess* of things, and then the slow mysterious work of making something out of it, something good, something blessed—poem, prayer, conversation, sermon, a sighting of grace, a recognition of Love, a shaping of virtue. This is the *Yeshua* of the Hebrew faithful, the *soteria* of the Greek Christians. Salvation. The recovery by creation and re-creation of the image of God. Writing is not a literary act but spiritual. And pastoring is not managing a religious business but a spiritual quest.

Prayer, the intensity of spirit in attention before God, lies at the heart of both writing and pastoring. In writing, I work with words; in pastoring, I work with people. But not mere words or mere people, but words and people as carriers of spirit/Spirit. The moment words are used prayerlessly and people are treated prayerlessly, something essential begins to leak out of life. It was this realization of a slow leakage, a spirit-loss, that had produced my sense of crisis. And Dostoevsky is nothing if not *spirited*: God intoxicated and word drunk.

My writer-crisis came when I was asked to write something that would appear as if written by someone else, someone well-known. I had been submitting articles, poems, and manuscripts to publishers for several years and getting them returned with rejection slips. This reprieve from uninterrupted rejections seemed providential. I accepted the assignment without thinking much about what I was doing, except that I was being appreciated, and paid well.

The article was published by a firm that had rejected several far better written manuscripts that I had submitted under my own name. I knew then that I could continue to be published and paid for it if I continued to write this way. It would be honest and useful work. But I also knew that what I had just written, while being factual (except for the attributed authorship) was not *true* in any living way. Such work was a job, not a vocation. I remembered Truman Capote's sneer, "That's not writing, it's typing."

My pastor-crisis was concurrent. In the course of organizing a new congregation in the suburbs, I felt pressure to get a lot of people together as quickly as possible in such a way that they

would provide the financial resources to build an adequate sanctuary for the worship of God. I found that gathering a religious crowd was pretty easy, provided I didn't get too involved with God. My ecclesiastical superiors sent me to workshops that showed me how to do it. I observed the success of other pastors who did it. Religious consumers, like all other consumers, respond to packaging and bargains. But I also knew that to follow this route I would have to abandon the very thing that gave the life of a pastor its worth: a passion for God.

Crisis. Decision time. I wanted to be published; I wanted to have a large congregation. But I couldn't be a writer and be published. And I couldn't be a pastor and get a large congregation. Not on the terms that were being offered to me at that time.

The world then was redolent with narcissism (it was the decade of the sixties). The story of Narcissus has long endured as a warning against the dangers of self-absorption, and a most useful warning it has been. But something different was happening here: Narcissus, instead of being used to warn, was being held up as patron. Human potential was all the rage in the parish; spiritual confessionals were bestsellers in the bookstores. *Self* was front and center.

On one level, this all seemed plausible. The aspirations of the human potential psychologists mirrored the Christian aspiration to the abundant life. As for confession, hadn't confession always been a Christian staple? Making it into a religious literary genre didn't seem that far out of line. But something wasn't right. I felt confused. Dostoevsky unconfused me.

Dostoevsky helped me to discern that this sudden enthusiasm for the Self was not at all the same thing as the historic Christian concern for the Soul, that the Self, in fact, was a devilish distortion of Soul. What people were calling the Self was similar to what Christianity has always named the Soul, but with all the God-hunger, the righteousness-thirst excised. Dostoevsky taught me that not by arguing, but by creating—creating characters who demonstrated the dehumanized desiccation of an unGodded life and, in contrast and comparison, the terrible beauties of a pursuit after God.

The modern zeal to explain human nature, to eliminate suffer-

ing and discontent and to make us comfortable in the world—this obsessive *self* interest, Dostoevsky demonstrated, was a reduction of vast, mysterious creatures with raging thirsts for God and insatiable hungers for holiness into what he dismissed as “Euclidean”—something that could be accounted for by lines and angles, measurements and numbers. “Man is not an arithmetical expression; he is a mysterious and puzzling being, and his nature is extreme and contradictory all through.” I began copying out these Soul-recovering sentences:

“People are people and not the keys of a piano.”

“Man's whole business is to prove to himself that he is a man and not a cog-wheel.”

“For 2 and 2 make 4 is not a part of life but the beginning of death.”

In his Russia and in my America, interest in God had been elbowed to the sidelines by a pushy interest in the Self. Writer after writer and pastor after pastor were engaged in the titillating business of unpacking emotional suitcases and holding up the various items for view. It was bra-and-panty voyeurism: guilt and innocence, anger and affection, lust and love—the undergarments of the soul—all exclaimed over and handled, but with no passion for God himself, no Pineal embrace in the nightlong struggle for identity through suffering and prayer with the God who suffers and prays with and for us in Christ.

The voyeurism developed into fetishism. The reduction of Soul to Self, and displacement of God from the center, had made it possible to diagnose self (bereft of mystery) and fabricate a religion precisely suited to the satisfaction of self-needs, but with all the intricacy of God and human relationship removed. “The fetish,” as Ernest Becker put it so succinctly in *The Denial of Death*, “is the manageable miracle, which the partner is not.” I edited Becker's sentence: “Fetish spirituality is the manageable miracle, which God is not.”

The culture in which I was trying to work out my vocation was hell-bent on partializing (Otto Rank's term) the unmanageable largeness of life. Dostoevsky's large spirited, extravagant, and reckless immersion in the depths of evil and suffering, love and redemption, recovered God and passion for me. Stavrogin was

not a man who could be dissuaded from his evil life and educated into salvation with a newly revised church school curriculum. Alyosha did not become holy by attending a therapy group.

Unlike his great contemporary, Tolstoy, who was forever drawing up educational programs and reform plans to eliminate poverty and suffering and injustice, Dostoevsky entered into the sufferings, into the mysterious crucible of faith and doubt, and looked around for the miracle, the rising from the dead. He would have nothing to do with a future in which people were made good and comfortable at the expense of their freedom, at the cost of God.

But the vocational culture in which I was trying to find my way was definitely Tolstoyan. The so-called "spiritual" leaders of my time were putting enormous pressure upon people to conform, adjust and fit in—to submit to explanations and be reduced to functions. My own denomination had what was called a "program agency" which published a "program calendar." "Program" was the chief vehicle of ministry. I remember being startled by a statement from a pastor whose reputation was high in those years. His athletic energy was topped off with a good smile which he used to great effect. After serving one congregation for five years, he was moving to another, three times its size. His readiness to move surprised me, and in my naiveté I asked why he was leaving so soon. "I have accomplished what I came to do; I have my program in place and working."

Program? What has program has got to do with spirituality, with creativity? Programs are fine for Euclidean minds and spirits, I suppose. And they are always useful for peripheral matters. But at the center? Program? I reached for another Dostoevsky novel, *The Devils* this time, and used it to maintain a healthy distance from the Program mentality with its reformist ancestry, and settled in to stubbornly endure Mystery with Shatov.

A writer discovers a workable plot and writes the same book over and over all his life to the immense satisfaction of his readers. The readers can feel literary without thinking or dealing with truth. Prostitute writer.

A pastor discovers a workable program and repeats it in congregation to the immense satisfaction of his or

her parishioners. The church members can be religious without praying or dealing with God. Prostitute pastor.

My most frightening encounter came with Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov had selected a socially worthless person to run an experiment upon, an experiment in murder. It could matter to no one whether the old woman, a pawnbroker, was dead or alive, for she had absolutely no usefulness to anyone or anything. She was a parasite, he thought, living off the poor. Raskolnikov killed her. And then, to his great surprise, he was shaken to the core of his existence: It *did* matter. This worthless old woman had a spiritual power simply by being human. Bare human existence contains enough glory to stagger any one of us into bewildered awe. Raskolnikov was awakened to an awareness of spiritual heights and depths that he had never dreamed of.

Suddenly, with a shock of recognition, I saw myself as Raskolnikov. Not murdering, exactly, but experimenting with words on paper and parishioners in the congregation, manipulating them in godlike ways to see what I could make happen. Pushing words around on paper to see what effect they might have. Pushing people around in the pews, working for the best combination. Reducing words to their dictionary sense. Reducing people to the value of their pledge. Facility with words and facility with people carry a common danger: the hubris of contemptuous disrespect. One of Raskolnikov's successors, Joseph Stalin, once said, "Paper will put up with anything written on it." So will fetish-ridden, idol-addicted congregations.

I retraced my steps. How had I arrived in the world of Raskolnikov? How had I come to think so irreverently of these people around me?

I was living in classic suburbia, and not liking it very much. The cornfield into which I had moved was daily being covered over with tract homes and asphalt. The people who gathered to worship God under my leadership were rootless and cultureless, only marginally Christian. They didn't read books. They didn't discuss ideas. All spirit seemed to have seeped out of their lives,

replaced by a garage sale clutter of clichés and stereotypes, securities and fashions. Dostoevsky's sentence hit the target: The people seem to be watered down . . . (they are) darting and rushing about before us every day, but in a sort of diluted state." It was a marshmallow culture, spongy and without substance. No hard ideas to push against. No fiery spirit to excite. Soggy suburbia.

This scene was new to me. I had grown up in a small Montana town, and went to schools in the seaport cities of Seattle, New York, and Baltimore. In the small western town virtually everyone had a three dimensional character around which anecdotes clustered like barnacles. In the cities I encountered the cross-cultural fertilization of Orientals, Europeans, Africans. But now everyone was, or was fast becoming, the same. I was thirty years old, and had never experienced this blandness, this willingness to be homogenized into passive consumerism.

I had no idea that an entire society could be shaped by the images of advertising. I had lived, it seems, a sheltered life. The experiments of Pavlov accounted for the condition of these people far better than anything in the four Gospels. They were conditioned to respond to the stimulus of the sale price quite apart from need, as effectively as Pavlov's dogs were trained to salivate at the bell's signal, quite apart from hunger. These were the people for whom I was praying and for whom I was writing, these people whose spirits had taken early retirement, whose minds had been checked at the door. Suburbia lobotomized spirituality.

In the flatness and boredom I lost respect for these anemic lives. These people who assembled in worship with me each week had such *puny* ideas of themselves. In a fast-food culture they came to church for fast-religion help. Hanging around them all week long, I was in danger of reducing my idea of them to their self-concepts. And then Dostoevsky, who lived in an almost identical society, rebuked me. While showing the greatest aversion to the culture itself, he refused to take the evidence the people presented of themselves as the truth, and dove beneath the surface of their lives; there he discovered in the depths fire and passion and God.

Dostoevsky made them appear large again, vast in their aspirations, their sins, their glories. The Karamazovs for instance—so

large, so *Russian*. He showed me how to look long and carefully at these families until I saw Karamazovs in every home. He trained my antennae to pick up the suppressed signals of spirituality in the denatured language of their conversations. I discovered tragic plots and comic episodes, works-in-progress all around me. I was living in a world redolent with spirituality. There were no ordinary people.

My task now was to pray and write, aware of these torrential energies and capabilities among the people who were unaware of them in themselves. I had been tricked into taking these peoples' version of themselves as the true version. But it was not true. Their lives had been leveled and overlaid with asphalt in a way similar to the grading and planting of these so recently green and rolling hills. But that visible surface was a two-inch thick lie. If I worked on the surface of what they showed me, I would end up committing Raskolnikovian crimes out of ignorant disrespect for these glorious beings who had been created in the image of God. I was sobered, and I became repentant.

Now when I came across dull people, I began to insert them into one of the novels to see what Dostoevsky would make of them. Before long, the deeper dimensions came into view: the eternal hungers and thirsts—and, in the background, God. I started finding Mozartian creativity in adolescents and Sophoclean tragedies in the middle-aged. The banality was a cover. If I looked hard and long enough there was drama enough in this vanishing cornfield to carry me for a lifetime.

One day I came across a sentence in Karl Barth that compared the methods of the Book of Genesis with the novels of Dostoevsky. They both, Barth noted, cavalierly ignore conventional valuations and honors and approach the lives of men and women by unearthing the underground and unsuspected depths of God in their conventional-appearing lives. Dostoevsky and Genesis do not respect the masks of men but judge their secrets; they see beyond what men and women present themselves to be and perceive what they are from what they are not; they see, in Paul's terms, their righteousness *reckoned* as the divine "nevertheless" and not as a divine "therefore," as forgiveness and not as an imprimatur upon what they think they are.

Dostoevsky had the good fortune, which becomes an inherited good fortune for all who read him, of getting it all together in his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. By no means a polished work—nothing Dostoevsky either wrote or lived was polished—it is, nevertheless, exuberant with the large potentialities of the soul. Frederick Buechner, writer and minister, called it “that great seething bouillabaisse of a book. It’s digressive and sprawling, many too many characters in it, much too long, and yet it’s a book which, just because Dostoevsky leaves room in it for whatever comes up to enter, is entered here and there by maybe nothing less than the Holy Spirit itself, thereby becoming, as far as I’m concerned . . . a novel less *about* the religious experience than a novel the reading of which *is* a religious experience: of God, both in his subterranean presence and in his appalling absence.”

There is a shining moment in this valedictory book when Alyosha experiences a kind of integrating benediction:

His soul, overflowing with rapture, was craving for freedom and unlimited space. The vault of heaven, studded with softly shining stars, stretched wide and vast over him. From the zenith of the horizon the Milky Way stretched its two arms dimly across the sky. The fresh, motionless, still night enfolded the earth. The white towers and golden domes of the cathedral gleamed against the sapphire sky. The gorgeous autumn flowers in the beds near the house went to sleep till morning. The silence of the earth seemed to merge into the silence of the heavens. The mystery of the earth came into contact with the mystery of the stars. Alyosha stood, gazed and suddenly he threw himself down upon the earth. He did not know why he was embracing it. He could not have explained to himself why he longed so irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss it all, but he kissed it weeping, sobbing, and drenching it with his tears and vowed frenziedly to love it, to love it forever and ever. “Water the earth with the tears of your gladness and love those tears,” it rang in his

soul. What was he weeping over? Oh, he was weeping in a rapture even more over those stars which were shining for him from the abyss of space and he was not ashamed of that ecstasy. It was as though the threads from all those innumerable worlds of God met all at once in his soul and it was trembling all over as it came in contact with other worlds.

To anyone who has moved through an apprenticeship in all those earlier novels, each of them seeking but not quite arriving at this sense of God’s integration, Alyosha’s blessing puts together what the devil puts asunder. But even a short apprenticeship in words and/or the Word—trying to write words honestly, trying to address people reverently—is sufficient qualification to appreciate the rapture.

Dostoevsky had intended to write a sequel. He planned to develop the life of Alyosha, Prince Myshkin’s successor in the “fool for Christ” line, through an adulthood of vocational holiness. But he didn’t write it. He died two months after completing *Brothers*. Maybe it is just as well. This kind of work is never complete. At best, we plant seeds. And die. And wait for resurrection. The scriptural epigraph to *The Brothers Karamazov* is, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12: 24).

Seed-planting Dostoevsky: six seed-novels sit on a shelf in my study. All that is left of his life still making a difference in my life. God and passion. He spurned the trivial and went for the jugular. He didn’t fit. He made a mess of his marriage and was tortured in his love. He gambled compulsively. His epilepsy crippled his writing but he created. He lived immersed in passion. He lived expectant of God. And he did this *vocationally*, making a calling out of passion and God.

Father Zossima explicated John’s text in a homily: “Many things on earth are hidden from us, but in return for that we have been given a mysterious inward sense of our living bond with the other world, with the higher, heavenly world and the roots of our thoughts and feelings are not here but in other worlds. That is

why philosophers say that it is impossible to comprehend the essential nature of things of earth. God took seeds from other worlds and sowed them on this earth and made his garden grow, and everything that could come up came up, but whatever grows is alive and lives only through the feeling of its contact with other mysterious worlds: if that feeling grows weak or is destroyed in you then what has grown up in you will also die. Then you will become indifferent to life and even grow to hate it."

I have listened to that sermon many times. It continues to do its work by returning me to the pencil-and-parish soil of my vocation—to my writing table as I try to put one word after the other honestly, to my parish rounds as I determine to set one foot after the other prayerfully.

Getting Started with Dostoevsky

Crime and Punishment, I think, is the place to start. It has the cleanest plot and fewest characters, which makes it most accessible to new readers. And then straight on to the heights, *The Brothers Karamazov*, which is chaotic and sprawling, but simply seethes with spiritual creativity. Dostoevsky's life is not nearly as interesting as his novels, but if you want to explore the person behind the books, my choice is the biography by Norwegian scholar Geir Kyetsaa: *Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Writer's Life* (Viking, 1981). Also, in 1988 Plough Publishing, an arm of the Hutterian Brethren, brought out *The Gospel in Dostoevsky*, a sampling of passages from Dostoevsky with an explicitly Christian emphasis.

NOTES