

A.N. Schmidt: A Mystical Correspondent of the Philosopher V.S. Solovyov

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Abstract--- *The article is devoted to the phenomenon of the personality of A.N. Schmidt, a modest journalist from Nizhny Novgorod, gained initial fame through her correspondence with the outstanding Russian philosopher V.S. Solovyov. However, Schmidt was the original novelist, the author of religious and mystical writings, whose considerable influence on many figures of Russian spiritual culture of the twentieth century is increasingly found in depth studies of this era. Modern receptions of Schmidt's creativity demonstrate the relevance of her ideas and need an adequate religious and mystical interpretation.*

Keywords--- *Russian Religious Philosophy, "New Religious Consciousness", Sophiology, Russian Mysticism, The Third Testament.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A.N. Schmidt's works are known to a narrow circle of specialists in the history of Russian philosophy. The main writings of Schmidt [From manuscripts; Schmidt] have been published, but in fact there is no deep scientific and philosophical study and adequate interpretation in line with Russian religious and mystical trends.

The study aims at emphasizing the features of Schmidt's work, its importance for contemporaries and the enduring relevance of a number of her ideas. To prove the need for a reversal of studies of her influence on contemporaries in the direction of religious philosophy and philosophy of mysticism; as well as in-depth study of Schmidt's creativity (first of all, her main work – "The Third Testament") in the framework of Russian mysticism.

II. DISCUSSION

A.N. Schmidt (1851-1905), a modest journalist from Nizhny Novgorod, became known for her correspondence with V. Solovyov (1853-1900). Being a Russian philosopher, recognized during his lifetime, famous in his homeland and abroad, he received many letters, but he did not read most of them; if he looked through them, he did not answer and he apologized to the public through the newspaper. Why did he pay attention to Schmidt's letters and moreover, why did he answer them thoroughly and regularly? The intrigue was exacerbated by the fact that the correspondence continued during the last months of philosopher's life, who took with him a lot of secrets. Schmidt became a truly integral part of the period of Russian culture of the early twentieth century, which is called the "spiritual revival" in philosophy and the "Silver Age" in literature.

The spiritual path of Schmidt is revealed in her Diary, published after death. Around 1866, Schmidt experienced the first mystical revelation, after which she began to write the mystical work "The Third Testament". In the course of her work, at a time of complete spiritual loneliness and intense creative search, she began to seek advice and support from famous religious figures and writers. Thus, in 1888 Schmidt sent one of the first versions of her work

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to Father John of Kronstadt, a famous Russian ascetic and spiritual teacher, writing him a large letter outlining her main ideas. But she probably didn't get an answer.

There are several letters from Schmidt to the writer V.G. Korolenko, who lived in Nizhny Novgorod, they struck up a lively correspondence, and then held several meetings and discussions [Read More: Kravchenko, Herald, p. 176-180].

Creating the main part of her work, Schmidt read in the magazine the first part of V. Solovyov's "Three conversations" in 1899 (published in the journal "Books of the Week" under the title: "Under the palm trees. Three talks about peace and military affairs. The first conversation" in October 1899) [Solovyov V.], it impressed her. She decided to send the philosopher her work, hoping to find his understanding and advice. Solovyov replied to her second letter, dated 7 March 1900, concerning the apocalyptic expectations of Schmidt, although apparently he had received and reviewed the manuscript she had sent earlier.

V. Solovyov was recognized not only as an outstanding philosopher in his lifetime, but also as a unique mystic. Memoirs of contemporaries, notes of friends and testimonies of the philosopher kept many strange and mysterious cases in his life. His introduction to A.N. Schmidt, correspondence and even a meeting with her in Vladimir (or Kovrov?) researchers unanimously recognize one of the most remarkable phenomenon at the end of the life of the philosopher-mystic.

In his letter, V. Solovyov wrote: "Having read your letter with the greatest attention, I was happy to see how close you had drawn to the truth on a question of the greatest significance, incorporated into the very nature of Christianity but not yet formulated clearly either in the consciousness of the church or general philosophy, although individual theosophists do speak about this side of Christianity (particularly Jacob Boehme and his followers: Gichtel, Pordage, Saint-Martin, Baader). Since 1878 I have found myself forced to deal with this question in public lectures, articles and books, maintaining a necessary caution. I think, on the basis of many facts, that the broad disclosure of this truth in the consciousness and life of Christianity and of all humanity is imminent in the near future, and your appearance seems to me to be very important and meaningful" [From the manuscript, 193]. Undoubtedly, in the letter of an unknown woman he was shocked by the deep understanding of his hidden, carefully concealed views and forebodings associated with the inevitable apocalypse.

There are the writings of S. Protopopov, a colleague of Schmidt in the newspaper, to whom she read Solovyov's letters, sharing her experiences and considerations. After Schmidt's death, Protopopov wrote a fairly extensive article about her, which never saw the light of day. The first draft of the article was kept in the diary of E.K. Medtner, who read the manuscript as an official censor before the publication of the article in the newspaper.

S. Protopopov knew how happy Schmidt was to find the features of "heavenly lover" and "The embodiment of Logos", represented by the famous philosopher, which were revealed to her in mystical visions. Protopopov recalled: "Having started the correspondence with V.S. Solovyov, A.N., of course, expressed him all her views. Strange thing, but it is so: Solovyov never sharply rose against adoration of the correspondent in his answers... He wrote her long letters, which I read and which made a very vague impression on me with their obscurity and their mysticism.

“You don’t understand,” A. N. told me. “We understand each other”.

Shortly before his death, Solovyov wanted to see A.N. They wrote off and met in Kovrov, where they spent the whole day in conversation. Returning from Kovrov A.N. was delighted to tell me that Solovyov had confirmed all her beliefs and that she was now firmly convinced of her rightness... (...) A.N. Schmidt perceived herself as an exceptional person, whose soul was especially close to God. At times it even seemed to her that the spirit of the Evangelical Mary moved into her, who, according to legend, died at the foot of the cross on Calvary” [E. K. Medtner’s Diary].

It is not known what Solovyov told when they met. Judging by his last letters, he did not want to develop the theme of his “incarnation”, the need to establish a new church of “The Third Testament”, etc., on what she, apparently, most of all insisted. Despite the fact that Schmidt seemed to have found a Teacher and a mentor of life in the philosopher, her demands on him increased disproportionately from letter to letter. Obsessive requests for constant attention appeared along with prophetic instructions. Thus, in a letter dated 17 June 1900, she wrote: “Dear friend! You pleased me on 28 May by writing: “The other day I will try to write more.” But there is still no letter, and my heart has long been in pain. Chinese events stir my soul. (*It is about the Boxer Rebellion in China - V.K.*). Is not it the beginning of denouement? So it or not, but hardly there will be now a break of purely world events and hardly will resume a former marginalized life. The unprecedented concept of a European army has already appeared. Of course, it, this army, will experience internecine strife, but still the first step to the international union is made. In view of such serious and strange times, I am inwardly eager to fulfill my life’s objective. I feel your words:

And there is an issue in the depth, the single issue

God has raised.

You seem to have answered your question. Is it my turn? I think it would be beneficial for me to communicate more with you, to see you more often /.../ Terrible, terrible hard to live without you now when I have found you and learnt. With all my heart and soul, Anna Schmidt” [item 11, N 48, letters 2-5].

In Solovyov’s penultimate letter (22 April 1900) to A. Schmidt he said: “(...) ...we truly feel great, but unbearably fantasize and get confused in trifles. (...) But enough about trifles. (...) Your confession arouses the greatest pity and mournfully intercedes for you before God. It is good that you once wrote it, but I ask you not to return to this subject. When I leave for Moscow today, I will burn the actual confession in both accounts, not only as a precaution, but as a sign that it is all just ashes. (...)” Please don’t talk to anyone about me, but rather pray to God in your spare moments.” [From manuscripts, 196-197]

It is noteworthy that in this letter V. Solovyov agreed on a date in Vladimir (Kovrov?). Obviously, everything was resolved for the philosopher even before the meeting with Schmidt, and he had an appointment with his ardent follower perhaps to make her change her mind.

The probable development of events can be judged quite definitely by the most recent letter of Vladimir Sergeyeovich to Schmidt: “Dear Anna Nikolaevna! Coming from the village, I found your letter of June 17. There are a lot of faithful issues. I agree that the old historical rigmarole is over. Well, and further: it is given not to us to know

times and terms. The other day I am going in South Russia for an indefinite time. As you can see, your desire to come to St. Petersburg to see me, regardless of the validity or groundlessness of this desire, still cannot be realized. I am very glad that you doubt the objective meaning of certain visions and suggestions, or statements that you do not know. It would not be generous of me to insist on their doubtfulness. Upon my return to Petersburg (probably in August), I'll write you. Be well, dear Anna. Sincerely yours, Vladimir Solovyov" [From the manuscripts, 198].

Note that in fact, Schmidt has not received instructions "from above" about what is Solovyov her "heavenly lover"; she "identified" philosopher-mystic in his literary revelation. In the Diary, Schmidt remembered that the reading of Solovyov's "Three conversations" impressed her. Earlier in the same diary, she wrote about some "signs" pointing to the earthly name of the "heavenly lover" - I.P. or Raphael. But this did not prevent Schmidt from considering Solovyov's last poems of "Sophia cycle" to be addressed directly to her, in her opinion, embodied the Church – Margarita.

Solovyov with respect to Schmidt was, as a mystic, more consistent. Recognizing the fundamental justice of some of her statements (mainly about the inevitable end of history), he categorically denied the possibility of any transfer of the highest mystical-erotic relations on the profane plan. The Great Meaning of True Love is comprehended irrationally and not on the physical level. Perhaps Solovyov knew or felt intuitively that over time, Schmidt increasingly claimed to be a mystical "collaboration"; it was an application for a higher spiritual union, which Solovyov could never accept.

The correspondence between Solovyov and Schmidt was tragically cut short by the sudden death of the philosopher. There is information that Anna Nikolaevna came to Troubetzkoy's estate (Uzkoye), where Solovyov died, spent there some days, but she was allowed to him only once, to the sleeping...

The word of Anna Schmidt actually sounded in her posthumous publications, it echoed among completely different people who really shared and developed her ideas of religious renewal and spiritual revival of Russian culture.

According to S. Bulgakov, he first heard about A. Schmidt in 1903, from G.I. Chulkov, who discovered the secret of her correspondence with the V.S. Solovyov. Bulgakov wrote a letter to the correspondent of the great philosopher and offered to publish their correspondence in the "New Path" journal, but to his surprise, Schmidt sent him personally copies of only two letters, and about the rest of the materials reported the following: "...that this correspondence was intimate and could not be printed before her death or the occurrence of "one event" (obviously, expected "transformation"), one or the other could happen soon" [Bulgakov, Quiet Thoughts, 55].

After her death, which happened very soon, on 7 March 1905, Bulgakov was able to "get" (according to him) the copies of remaining letters, and then the manuscript. Bulgakov prepared everything for publication, but published them only 10 years later (!), maintaining anonymity as a compiler and publisher, according to A.F. Losev, "...fearing proximity to unorthodox mysticism of A.N. Schmidt" [Losev, V. Sol., 102-103].

A close friend of S. Bulgakov, E.K. Gertsyk, wrote: "Sergey Nikolaevich prepared them (*Schmidt's works and letters – V.K.*) for printing, wrote the foreword, gnostically interpreting Schmidt's insights, but published the book

not in the publishing house “Path”, where he was the chief editor, he published the book at his own expense, nameless, and he did not dare to put his name even under the foreword. And the deepest and dearest thoughts were expressed there!” [Gertsyk, 151].

S. Bulgakov expressed appreciation for the mystical works of A.N. Schmidt, a deep analysis of her work in a theological key. The future priest and philosopher, S. Bulgakov realized some complexity of his own position in relation to the non-denominational mysticism of A.N. Schmidt, but as a prominent figure in the movement of “new religious consciousness”, he frankly admired the radicalism and courage of the “sibyl” in Nizhny Novgorod.

Bulgakov wrote about the manuscripts of A.N. Schmidt: “Here we have not only an interesting human document, the history of the soul, quite exceptional in the fate, not only the intimate page of the biography of V. Solovyov, but also the paramount importance of the mystical treatise, which will safely bear comparison with the works of European mystics (J. Boehme, Pordage, Swedenborg, etc.). Schmidt’s mysticism is so meaningful and rich and the assessment may be only a matter of the long-lasting and in-depth inquiry in a variety of ways” [Bulgakov, Quiet Thoughts, 56].

S.N. Bulgakov regarded the emergence of Schmidt in the life of Solovyov as a “female alter ego”, caused by the mystical appeals of the philosopher-mystic-poet. He also noted the influence of Solovyov on the work of Schmidt: “Biographically, in any case, it deserves attention that after acquaintance with the V. Solovyov, which was soon followed by his death, her own work is noticeably impoverished, almost runs out, and in return there are translations and abstracts of Solovyov’s philosophical books”. [From the manuscripts, IX-X].

Not only S. Bulgakov, but also P. Florensky appreciated the significance of Schmidt’s heritage [Florensky]. N. Berdyaev wrote: “It is no exaggeration to say that the book of Schmidt is recognized as one of the most remarkable phenomena of world mystical literature. This is the first mystical book in Russia in the strict sense of the word, a mystical book of great style, similar to the works of Boehme, Swedenborg and other classics of mysticism”. [Berdyaev, 12].

Even during Schmidt’s life, her works, social activities and personality had a certain impact on many figures of Russian culture, they left some unambiguous memories. The nephew of the philosopher, S.M. Solovyov showed his negative attitude to mysticism and Schmidt’s personality. He wrote: “Schmidt ... built the gnostic system with her mind... She delivered the sermon of the new Church, which should be born from Orthodoxy, preaching “The Third Testament”, she taught about the feminine nature of the third incarnation... A poor woman imagined herself “the angel of the Church”, and Solovyov was considered as the new incarnation of Christ, her beloved bridegroom” [Solovyov S., 372-373].

K. Mochulsky saw in Schmidt almost the “angel of death”, “terrible double” of Aphrodite, Daughter of Heaven, “the last and most terrible temptation” of V. Solovyov as a philosopher-mystic. At the same time, noting Schmidt’s “tremendous power of the scriptures”, K. Mochulsky was inclined to see a connection of madness in them” ...with mystical contemplations of such depth and boldness, before which the revelations of Madame Guyon or Catherine Emmerich seem dull and insignificant” [Mochulsky, 212].

G. Chulkov and A.A. Blok treated Schmidt warm and friendly.

The most remarkable and, in several senses of the word, symbolic is the obvious evolution of A. Bely and E.K. Medtner in relation to A. Schmidt and her book. A. Bely met A. Schmidt in the house of M.S. Solovyov, a brother of the philosopher [Bely, p. 142-144]. For Bely, an article about “Theurgy” which she criticized, Schmidt in life was rather a mistake than a serious ideological opponent. (In a letter to Medtner, dated April – the beginning of May 1904, he noted: “Schmidt came. But I was with her uniformed polite and only” [A. Bely, P. 448]). However, after her death, Bely wrote to E. Medtner: “Poor, poor Anna Nikolaevna! And we in Moscow had a subscription for her...” And then in the same letter he wrote: “I’m going to have the future religious and social doctrine, which I want to call the doctrine of the feminine Pan-Monism: the Maiden Tsar should be on the altar of the continuing mysteries of the future religious community (this community is the Church)...” [A. Bely, P. 489-490]. The allusion to the teachings of Schmidt in this “doctrine” of A. Bely is obvious. And what a contrast: from annoying “Schmidt” to “The Maiden Tsar”!

E.K. Medtner, being a censor in Nizhny Novgorod, repeatedly communicated with Schmidt. In a letter dated 4 November 1903, Medtner wrote to Bely: “And yesterday, Schmidt hobbled to me for the first time. I was a little scared. Melnikov’s hints about the isolation of my character and my unsociability did not help. Nevertheless, she came. She came and said that she would come again”, etc. [A. Bely, P. 369]. Then Medtner attended her funeral, describing it in detail in a letter to A. Bely. It was Medtner who retained the valuable biographical material about A. Schmidt. Emigrating, Medtner also took away the book “The Third Testament”, studied it carefully, and interpreted it in the Jungian spirit, advised to read... Today literary critics are solving this mystery [Bogomolov].

Thanks to the memories of M. Gorky, who worked with Anna Nikolaevna in the newspaper “The Nizhny Novgorod leaf” in the early twentieth century, we know about the actual mistakes in the characteristics of the person and activity of Schmidt, made by N. Berdyaev, and S. Bulgakov, and P. Florensky. So, they believed that Schmidt was completely unfamiliar with the world of mystical literature and her “intuition” was totally original. Gorky in his story described one of the conversations with Schmidt, in which she suddenly appeared before him a completely different, unfamiliar person: “...she spoke very well, decorated her speech with quotes from the works of the fathers of the church, talked about the Gnostics...” [Gorky, 166].

In addition, Berdyaev put Schmidt in credit for the fact that she was hiding, hiding her mystical insights from the general public, and devoting life to writing the manuscript. But Gorky proved that Schmidt created the sect “New Israel”, which, according to some reports, existed until the 1920s.

The “Mystery” of Anna Nikolaevna Schmidt is still waiting for the researchers. In the West, this name is virtually unknown, although there is a translation of “The Third Testament” into French [Schmidt]. However, it is increasingly evident that the work of A. Schmidt is integrated in the era of the Russian spiritual Renaissance – the “new religious consciousness”, “searching for God”, “God-building”. At that time, a new religious and mystical trend was developed – Russian mysticism, as one of the directions in the world mystical movement. The concept of “mysticism” was reinterpreted, various religious-mystical and mystical-philosophical directions were studied, both in Russian and in foreign spiritual culture [Merezhkovsky; Kravchenko].

Today there is a paradoxical situation: the religious-mystical interpretation of the ideas of Schmidt was proposed in line with current religious and philosophical research [See: Kravchenko, *Mysticism*, p. 156-177]. But this adequate consideration aspect of the modern reception of the ideas of Schmidt was completely ignored, and the atheistic and skeptical linguists, cultural researchers, and even historians of Russian religious philosophy continued to wonder why Schmidt and her ideas were on the minds of representatives of the Russian spiritual Renaissance or the Silver age... However, the impact of Rudolf Steiner on A. Bely is recognized and investigated; it is perhaps because there are quite a number of foreign studies of religious-mystical writings of the Doctor. And the ideas of Schmidt are not considered and her influence on the figures of Russian culture of the early twentieth century remains a mystery.

Until now, the value of personality and works of Schmidt is considered exclusively in the historical, literary, cultural and source studies; often – forced, in connection with the study of the work of the famous figure of the early twentieth century. But for the modern researchers and readers at the beginning of the XXI century the angle of consideration of A. Schmidt’s creativity is extremely important, because otherwise her main ideas, problems and their interpretations are not visible and understandable, both in her life and after her death in the early twentieth century.

Thus, A.P. Kozyrev quite rightly points to the influence of the ideas of A. Schmidt on the worldview of S.N. Bulgakov, summing up a solid source base [Kozyrev]. However, a meaningful consideration of the transformations in the sophiology of the Russian religious philosopher in the process of understanding the ideas of Schmidt is a completely different kind of research, which no one has yet started. This is all the more interesting because between the time of the acquisition of Schmidt’s manuscript heritage in 1905-1906 and their publication in 1916 not only did great historical events take place in Russia and the world (wars and revolutions), but the spiritual life of Bulgakov underwent radical changes (from idealism to Marxism and then to religious philosophy). And it is still unknown how his understanding of Schmidt’s manuscripts changed during this long and intense period, because even in terms of source studies it is clearly not enough to indicate only his article from the “Quiet thoughts” (1903) and an anonymous foreword to the manuscripts of Schmidt in 1916, as two milestones in the difficult and winding path of spiritual search and torment of the religious philosopher.

The source base or “historical and cultural cartography” (A.V. Lavrov’s definition) of the early 20th century has already been prepared, taking into account that such work became possible only after the perestroika of the 1990s, when the long period of “militant atheism” in the USSR ended. However, there is the characteristic remark of the critic on the study of the modern philologist E. Hollerbach on the history and ideology of Path Publishing, in general, well-prepared: “...the author does not always clearly understand the theological side of the imiaslavie (name-glorifying or onomatodoxy - V.K.) disputes...” [Ivanova, 209].

So with regard to “The Third Testament” of A. Schmidt, E. Hollerbach, mentioning it, does not feel the religious and mystical background of the publication of the book. Citing reports in the then press, the researcher notes: “The famous Moscow Path Publishing” did not dare to put the company on this book and agreed only to place it in its warehouse. This shows the cautious of the editors of the publishing house. But at the same time, they couldn’t help

but pay attention to the book” [Hollerbach, P. 212].

It is not surprising that for Hollerbach, who defined the “pathfarers” as “neo-Slavophiles”, their ambiguous attitude to the book of Schmidt will forever remain an unsolved mystery. Although Bulgakov published Schmidt’s manuscripts, and N.A. Berdyaev, another leader of the “pathfarers”, as already mentioned, commended the mysticism of Schmidt.

Today there has been a more alarming trend in the consideration of the mystical book of A. Schmidt. Already at the end of the twentieth century A. Etkind, a famous researcher of Russian psychoanalysis, philosophical and psychological aspects of the Silver age and Russian sectarianism, defined the book of Schmidt as “a reporter’s record of the mystical experience of Russian sectarianism.” At the same time, A. Etkind considered the “mutual interest” of Solovyov and Schmidt as a “caricature of the great and tragic history of mutual attraction of high Russian culture and folk sectarianism” [Etkind, 175].

A. Rychkov in psychological consideration of A. Schmidt’s creations and personality went even further. Having devoted an extensive article to the analysis of E. Medtner’s marginalia on the pages of A. Schmidt’s book “The Third Testament”, Rychkov notes: “...with all painful rejection of occultism and gnosis knowledge, E.K. Medtner accepts Jung’s definition of intuition as the ability of foresight, and therefore quite seriously finds and notes in the text of the Russian woman-mystic A.N. Schmidt’s “revelations” about the future of Russia” [Rychkov, 406].

For the researcher of the heritage, who stood on the Jungian position, concern for A. Schmidt is due to this point of view. “The theme of Sophia is transversal in the work of A.N. Schmidt and personally significant for C.G. Jung, it is another obvious reason of E. Medtner’s address to the A. Schmidt’s notes during “The development of Jung” [Rychkov, 376].

Although the reasons for Vyacheslav Ivanov’s interest to Schmidt, to whom “The Third Testament” is transmitted by E. Medtner, remain unclear, and Rychkov expresses interesting, but purely literary arguments [Rychkov, P. 370].

However, further A. Rychkov mentions a remarkable case in our context, which occurred at a psychotherapeutic seminar during the international interdisciplinary conference in 2017. Rychkov proposed to discuss Schmidt’s book to scientists and practitioners-psychotherapists (it should be emphasized: none of the participants in the discussion, except the speaker, did not read Schmidt’s book!). Rychkov noted: “According to the participants, the book by A.N. Schmidt contains the text clearly hypercompetitiveness and neurotic personality, unsatisfied with the secondary role of women in society and therefore she adds Daughter instead of the Holy Spirit to Trinity. Since there is no emphasis on self-discovery in the text, this is not a gnostic, but a primitive feminist work based on infantile projections of the ideal parent couple to God, as well as the probable identification themselves and V.Solovyov with this couple...”, etc. [Rychkov, p. 410-411].

It is not that psychoanalytic interpretation of texts and personality of A. Schmidt is impossible. But it should not be presented as a “final diagnosis” instead of a meaningful study of the book itself. As you know, F. Nietzsche, V. Solovyov and many philosophers and cultural figures suffered from more or less serious mental disorders. And E.

Medtner himself met C.G. Jung first as a patient with a doctor! After all, since the time of S. Freud it is known that the concept of mental “norm” is relative.

The main problem for historians of philosophy and philosophers of religion is that modern researchers do not bother to study the original source (a complex and contradictory religious-mystical text!), and seek to detect only the evaluation opinions of the contemporaries of the author often absolutely in other sphere of spiritual activity and knowledge, often unrelated to the real content source.

Undoubtedly, it is important and interesting to know what E. Medtner thought about Schmidt’s book, who scribbled pages with many notes. But we have no right to be limited *only by this* opinion, especially without delving into the original content of the work in an adequate way for it, namely, religious and mystical.

Outstanding Russian religious philosophers compared the book of A. Schmidt with the works of J. Boehme, Meister Eckhart and other recognized Western mystics. But no one in the West comes to mind to be limited exclusively to psychoanalytic or literary modern research instead of studying their texts. And in post-Soviet Russia, the mentality allows, according to our famous satirist, to preserve the “style of dispute”, perceiving “the taste of food by ear, the stench in the eye, imagining a film by its title, painting by name”, etc.

The “mystery” of A. Schmidt’s works should be revealed to modern researchers of spiritual culture of the early twentieth century, so that there is no situation when her work is interpreted arbitrarily, and even more, it is replaced by “diagnoses” or one-sided reproduction of the opinions of Schmidt’s contemporaries.

Emphasizing the importance of Schmidt in the sky of spiritual revival of the early twentieth century, it is necessary to note the consonance raised by her religious and mystical problems and our time.

- **Apocalyptic.** As we have seen, it was the discussion of “recent times” in Schmidt’s letters and it attracted V. Solovyov. In our time, when the “ends of the world” are announced more often than new political programs in most countries of the world, the interpretation of “signs” and “symbols” of the approaching end of time, given by Schmidt, sounds quite fresh and original. If contemporaries noted its interpretation of the four horses of the Apocalypse, then within the framework of the modern convergence of science and religion, her interpretation of “light” appears, for example, in the human perception of converting to “darkness”, etc. Schmidt’s ideas about the end of “national” stories and the beginning of the history of “global” for our contemporary is quite clear in terms of globalization. Premonitions and growing horror in connection with the possibility of nuclear or some other world war – this is the modern understanding of the Apocalypse.

- **“Feminine mystique”.** S. Bulgakov, P. Florensky, and N. Berdyaev emphasize the originality of Schmidt’s “feminine mystique”. If Bulgakov quite rightly considered V.Solovyov’s Eternal Femininity in a number of literary and mystical allusions (P.B. Shelley, A.S. Pushkin, V. Goethe, etc.), A. Schmidt’s female mysticism can and should be considered as an Orthodox version of the famous line of female mysticism, most clearly manifested in the early Christian era, then in medieval Catholicism, and later reflected in the Protestant versions of pietism and quietism. Thus Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila and other medieval representatives of this wave of women’s monastic mysticism in their religious ecstasy, not only mystically “lusted” to Christ as the “Heavenly Bridegroom”, but

aspired to join his earthly suffering, thus affirming their unity with Him in this Vale of sorrow and tears. A. Schmidt did not have a shadow of such a desire, because she, in her understanding, already really existed in a state of mystical unity with the eternal “beloved” in the “different” dimension, absolutely free from earthly sins and suffering. Another thing was that she had just endured “in heaven” “implemented” spiritual love, in these limits, what V. Solovyov could not accept.

G. Ackerman calls the doctrine of Schmidt “mystical feminism” [Ackerman], because she predicted the death of all men after the Antichrist and the salvation of mankind thanks to the dedication of several heroic and selfless believing women. At the same time, given the obvious bias of Schmidt’s teaching in the fashionable today “gender” theme, referring to the image and role of the Church-Margarita, the interpretation of “spiritual marriage”, etc. should be considered still within the framework of Orthodox dogma, from which Schmidt did not allow herself to retreat.

- **The problem of Mary Magdalene**, raised by Schmidt, is absolutely in consonance with today’s views of some researchers. In her “revelations” Schmidt interpreted the image of Mary as it was discovered, almost half a century later, in Gnostic manuscripts found in Nag Hammadi in 1945! The fact is truly amazing. And in a very modern spirit, Schmidt reveres Magdalene as the closest disciple of Christ, who was entrusted with the most intimate secrets for a more accessible interpretation of their other disciples. This is completely in consonance with the modern semiotic interpretation of the historical mission of Magdalene [Koivunen]. At the same time, Schmidt lacks the “domestic” plan of relations between Jesus and Magdalene (creation of an ordinary family, birth of children), as in the infamous version of the British historians [Baigent], the adjacent research literature [Starbird] and D. Brown’s interpretation. The Russian prophetess speaks of “heavenly marriage” rather in the spirit of the integrity of life, as today the image of Sophia Mary is interpreted in an Ecumenical and religious way [Schipflinger]. And this is certainly the closest to the Russian tradition of Sophia and V. Solovyov that should be taken into account in modern religious and philosophical studies.

- **“Incarnations”** of the eternal “beloved”, Jesus-Logos and the Church-Margarita – this is the most controversial problem raised by Schmidt, which today is “read”, first of all, in the spirit of “reincarnation” of Hindu-Buddhist or Theosophical ideas. By the way, the interpretation of Schmidt’s teaching as theosophy in modern Wikipedia, apparently, is connected, first of all, with this idea of “The prophetess of Nizhny Novgorod”. The problem, obviously, was specifically considered in her sectarian activity and caused the greatest claims from the official Church. But the struggle of the official churches against heresies is the eternal plot of Christianity. And as shown by the millennial experience of the Church fathers and dogmatic defenders of her purity, it need to be examined and criticized, and not be rejected wholesale.

- **“The living Church”** is the most poignant idea of Schmidt, which she outlined in a letter to John of Kronstadt: “The Church is not only an abstract concept, as they thought until now, it is a living spiritual body and face; and not by the buildings of temples, materially, and not by the creeds alone, the children of the Church are gathered together, they are also gathered in the living body of their mother, through which they are born from Christ, in the sacrament of baptism” [From manuscripts, 241]. Today, as churches are closing all over Europe, turning into hotels and restaurants, and the idea of a “living Church” for those who keep the faith is as relevant as ever. The Word of

Schmidt was first performed in the era of acute religious thirst in the early twentieth century, but in the era of the true Church “lethargy” in the beginning of the XXI century and the idea of requiring a “revival” of the Church, may be considered as a prophecy, and as a guide to new religious service. In addition, A. Schmidt clearly gravitated to what is now called “ecumenism” in her teachings and sectarian activities. The “living Church” had to grow and develop in her teachings and sectarian activities. The name of her sect was the “New Israel” and it meant not only the fact that Schmidt and her followers were the new “seeking of the holy City”, but also implied the future connection of Christianity with Judaism that today too many people find interesting. But one should not forget Schmidt’s commitment to Church teachings, especially to the Old Testament motifs (Florensky noted that often the reasoning of Schmidt was “the elucidation and illumination of the teachings of the Church” [Florensky, 725]).

- **Lack of spirituality**, which Schmidt opposed. It is a clear meta of our time. In the biblical spirit justified by Schmidt as “half-humanity”, today the lack of spirituality is daily and hourly demonstrated by the media in a variety of different examples. S. Bulgakov in 1918 highly appreciated the idea of Schmidt about the appearance of a “new man” – “Homo socialisticus”. The teachings of Schmidt, like any other, discussing the problem of “dehumanization” of man, will always be relevant.

III. CONCLUSION

A.N. Schmidt was not only an active participant in correspondence with the philosopher V.S. Solovyov, she was largely commensurate with his personality, vividly and directly perceived mystical and philosophical ideas and translate them in her own, special way. Solovyov did not agree with all interpretations of Schmidt, but in some important points he showed his solidarity.

The name of Anna Schmidt is recorded in the annals of the Russian “new religious consciousness”, and her fate and work became a necessary addition and a kind of clarification of the basic mystical intuitions of a number of figures of the “Russian spiritual revival”.

A.N. Schmidt is one of the most important and, in a sense, symbolic figures of the early twentieth century, as well as a possible source of relevant ideas for the spiritual life of the early XXI century. She is an interesting personality, mainly by the fact that her life example proved: there are and will be the seekers of the highest truth and noble purpose of life in the thickness of the spiritual life of the Russian people, which contemporaries may consider to be strange and even unpleasant. Despite the fact that their personal creativity is not recognized (or not generally recognized), they tirelessly and selflessly promoted and developed Russian spiritual culture by their activity.

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