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Comparing Monarchical Use of Religion and Popular Responses in England and Russia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

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Comparing Monarchical Use of Religion and Popular Responses
in England and Russia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

International Studies Program

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By

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Abstract:

This thesis compares the use of religion by Russian and English monarchies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the response of the public in each country. It examines official religion in each state, as well as the kinds of toleration each extended to other religions. In both cases, the outlook of the monarchy changed over the course of the period under study; while both monarchies clearly understood the key role religion played in the lives of their subjects and the power it afforded the state and its sovereigns, the “official” use of religion continued in Russia and ultimately dwindled in England in the eighteenth century. The fate of competing religious tendencies in each society also contrasted during these key centuries.

Drawing on scholarly literature on religion and politics in Russia and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this essay argues that the two cases can be usefully contrasted. One country, Russia, focused on changing religious forms of practice, while the other, England, focused more on changing the substance of the religion itself. The Russian monarchy explicitly sought to use religion as a tool, preserving its position in society and the people’s beliefs. The monarchy in England sought to make substantive changes in religious belief and worship, clearing the way for the rise of other popular religions.

Religion in Russia and England played an integral role in how the monarchies in the two nations ruled during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was a period of tremendous change and expansion, and monarchs in Russia and England sought to do what they could to cement control over their citizens, to retain their full power, and to keep their empires intact and growing. Both monarchies decided to make use of religion because it resonated so deeply within the common man's heart and everyday life. Religion gave the monarchies a way to manipulate the people and used it to gain the people's sympathy. For those who adhered to their beliefs tightly, religion limited how people thought and behaved, and made them loyal subjects. Others sought to challenge established religious practice and through new thought processes sought to break with the dogma of a particular church and question the norms, beliefs and political power that underpinned both kingdoms.

This thesis argues that the Russian monarchy used religion as a tool to have more control over the nation. By contrast, the English monarchy wanted to use their position to make substantive changes to religion. I explore these themes through two sections in this essay. In the first I examine the structural changes to the Church that Russia made through Patriarch Nikon, Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great. In the second section, I examine the changes made in England by James I, Charles II and Oliver Cromwell to the context of English worship. Both sections include a consideration of the reactions of the public to these changes.

The role of religious practice in Russia has been the subject of growing study by scholars.¹ In the past twenty years scholars have sought to complicate existing generalizations,

¹Leonid Heretz, "Bodies Like Bright Stars: Saints and Relics in Orthodox Russia by Robert H. Greene," *The Catholic Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 371.

focusing on crucial episodes in Russian church history.² One topic that has received particular attention is the Russian schism within the Russian Orthodox Church that took place in the seventeenth century³. This schism, or split in an organization or group, began with Patriarch Nikon. Some scholars believed that the split should be seen as setting out "...two different visions of Russian Orthodoxy."⁴ The Old Believers rejected Nikon's reforms and believed that Russians solely maintained the purity of Orthodoxy. Nikon, meanwhile, held a global vision of Orthodoxy and wanted to put Russian Orthodoxy beside world Orthodoxy. Interestingly, both sides believed that only one set of practices was right, rejecting the other. Historian Robert Crummy argues that the Old Believers' only goal was to remain Orthodox. They considered themselves to be the correct Orthodox and were anti-reformers.⁵

Recent research has explored how Orthodoxy was a "...lived, adaptive, and flexible cultural system, rather than as a static set of rigidly applied rule and dictates."⁶ Scholars have suggested that the Orthodox religion has been characterized by its "... loosely defined religious unity and in purveying its particular theology through visual, ceremonial, and practical terms."⁷ Historians, like Thomas Bremer have noted the expanding "...religious life and church history in the

² Heretz, "Bodies like Bright Stars," 371.

³ Scott M. Kenworthy, "Old Believers in a Changing World. By Robert O. Crummey. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011," *Church History* 82, no. 01 (February 2013): 223.

⁴ Kenworthy, "Old Believers," 223.

⁵ Kenworthy, "Old Believers," 224.

⁶ Valerie A. Kivelson and Robert H. Greene, *Orthodox Russia: Belief and Practice Under the Tsars* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 5.

⁷ Kivelson and Greene, *Orthodox Russia*, 18.

East Slavic lands that has emerged over the past two decades”⁸ and insisted that the Russian Orthodox Church is to be comprehended in a wide relative context with western advancements and styles. Bremer states that the Orthodoxy of Russia be understood as intertwined with the country's state.⁹

He emphasizes that the Orthodox Church viewed the Russian state "...as the God-ordained method to protect and expand the Orthodox faith."¹⁰ Historians find Nikon pursuing this goal in an impressive way. Nikon was able to take “autonomous control of the Church, independent of any secular power...” while being second in command to the tsar and having a powerful influence over the state affairs.¹¹ Historians also highlight Peter the Great's resolve in presiding over a reform of the system of the Church through important decrees, such as the creation of the Synod.¹² Catherine II, historians say, went down the same path that Peter the Great did in striking the last blow upon "...the traditional ways of the Russian Church.”¹³

Indeed, religion dominated seventeenth century political life. In Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church held power over the tsar's government and reign and shaped the country's identi-

⁸ Robert H. Greene, "Cross and Kremlin: A Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Russia. By Thomas Bremer," *Church History* 85, no. 01 (February 2016): 161.

⁹ Green, "Cross and Kremlin", 162.

¹⁰ Dennis J. Dunn, "Cross and Kremlin: A Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Russia by Thomas Bremer," *The Catholic Historical Review* 101, no. 3 (January 2013): 593.

¹¹ Quote from N.F. Kapterev, *Patriarch Nikon i tsar' Aleksei Mikhailovich*, vol 2 (Sergiev Posad, 1912), pp. 142. in V.V. Murzin-Gundorov, "Books of Commemoration as a Source of New Data on the Genealogy of Patriarch Nikon," *Russian Studies in History* 55, no. 1 (August 2016): 54.

¹² V. A. Kuchumov, "Eldership in Russia," *Russian Studies in History* 52, no. 1 (Summer 2013): 39.

¹³ Kuchumoy, "Eldership," 42.

ty. The Orthodox religion was the official religion of Russia and the people devoutly followed it during Peter the Great's time. The devout strictly followed the Church's teachings regarding the practice of Lent, some even risking sickness and death by not eating and doing what else was necessary for them.¹⁴ Other laws banned "evil" musical instruments and masques.¹⁵ Church laws even reached into the monarch's orbit. For example, in 1669, Prince Gregory Obolensky, a *pantler* of the Tsar, served a prison sentence because he commanded that work be done on the Sabbath day. Though they adhered to the laws of the Orthodox Church, many Russian people apparently did not demonstrate or even feel a deeper attachment. Their attitude toward it during the seventeenth century might compare to a student who knows the importance of following a school's rules and avoiding trouble, but does not feel those rules to be important to him or her on a personal level. Some priests had the same disposition as the common people, and were notorious for their consumption of alcohol and indecency. This happened because the priests enlisted 150,000 men from the peasantry and those marginalized within the nobility.¹⁶ No proper examination existed that would filter these choices, and no actual institution was available to teach them what they needed to know or do. This enforced the attitude that the only important thing rested in following the letter of the law for both the people and the priests of Russia.

However, in the mid-1600s the Russian church experienced a crisis that shook Orthodox Christianity. In 1652, Tsar Alexis named Nikon, whose intensity captivated the pious Russian ruler, to fill the role of Church patriarch. Nikon agreed to take the position if Alexis agreed to

¹⁴ Constantin de Grunwald, *Peter the Great*, (London: D. Saunders with MacGibbon & Kee, 1956), 42.

¹⁵ Grunwald, *Peter the Great*, 42.

¹⁶ Grunwald, *Peter the Great*, 43.

two conditions: the first being that Alexis follow Nikon as a disciple and the second being that Alexis support attempts to reform the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁷ A key aspect of these reform efforts involved revising the texts used to train Orthodox priests. Nikon's forceful reforms were even more far-reaching in their efforts to control the Russian people's everyday life. He advocated believers spend up to four hours in church every day, and be barred from cursing, playing cards, drinking alcohol, and indulging in sexual misbehavior. Nikon supported Tsar Alexis for six years, but in 1658 the Tsar's attitude shifted against "...Nikon's drastic innovations in the Church service and the prayer book..." Nikon lost public support and that of Tsar Alexis who began to see the Russian Church as having gained too much power over the state.¹⁸

These themes are clear in Thomas Bremer's recent book, *Cross and Kremlin: A Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Russia*, which argues that reforms were needed because of the apparent tension with the "old" and "new" in the seventeenth century with regard to religion.¹⁹ The Old Believers split from the church in 1667 because of disagreements they had with the changes made by Patriarch Nikon and as a consequence this split brought Nikon's dismissal. Nikon's attempts to elevate his position higher than the tsar's ended with his dismissal and the tsar becoming, "the highest position in the state, and...in the church. The church had to be subordinate to the interests of the state."²⁰ When Peter the Great became Tsar of Russia in 1682 he

¹⁷ Robert K Massie, *Peter the Great: His Life and World*. (New York: Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, Inc., 1981), 55-56.

¹⁸ Vasily V. Zenkovsky, "The Spirit of Russian Orthodoxy," *Russian Review* 22, no. 1 (January 1963): 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/126594>.

¹⁹ Thomas Bremer, *Cross and Kremlin : a brief history of the Orthodox Church in Russia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d), 19.

²⁰ Bremer, *Cross and Kremlin*, 19-20.

was determined to reduce the power of the Orthodox Church and push Russia into the new age that all the rest of Europe was entering. Peter saw the risks in Nikon's Schism, or split between opposed parties caused by differences in beliefs and practices, and decided to name Stefan Yavorsky, the Metropolitan of Ryazan, as the deputy of the Holy Patriarchal in 1700.²¹ This position gave Yavorsky control in matters of schismatics and heretics.

Peter was a follower of the Orthodox faith, but felt no obligation to strictly follow its practices. He sought to avoid having the state fall under the Church's sway, as it had during Nikon's time, and saw the Russian Church as a tool for teaching people and eliminating their ignorance. He wanted the Orthodox religion to thrive, but under the state's regulation. Peter wanted to make sure no more confusion would occur with the common people in how they practiced their religion. Twenty-two years after Peter installed Yavorsky he established the Holy Synod, a group of Archbishops elected by the tsar and given the authority to direct church affairs.²² The Holy Synod was responsible for the proceedings and operation of schools and seminaries, helping those in need, handling witchcraft and sacrilege accusations, disposing of the estates of priests, electing bishops, and presiding over weddings, doctrine and the clergy.

Peter's reforms put him at the head of the Church, as the populace soon realized. The church was absorbed into the state and did not have its independence anymore. In carrying out these changes, Peter the Great attempted to have the Orthodox traditions applicable to his generation by the implementation of the, "Western methods and principles."²³ The Russian Church

²¹ Grundwald, *Peter the Great*, 144.

²² Grundwald, *Peter the Great*, 145.

²³ Bremer, *Cross and Kremlin*, 21.

was not pleased with the changes – including assuming control over clerical finances -- that Peter implemented. Not all accepted Peter's reforms; some rejected both what Nikon did and what Peter had done, and clung to the traditionalist part of the Russian religion, including the old forms of prayer and service that people practiced after the Schism. Peter's changes redefined the relationship between the Church and the Russian state, though he did not want to control its doctrine per se, preferring instead that its function managing the Russian populace proceed without undue mishap.

Catherine the Great, who became Tsarina in 1762, was also energetic in her efforts to utilize religion.²⁴ During his brief reign, her husband, Peter III, had estranged the Orthodox order by reinstating laws that the state would take charge over the Church's lands. His military and imperial failures undermined his leadership though, and created the opportunity for Catherine the Great to take the throne in 1762. At this time, Russia was recovering from the Seven Years War. Catherine resolved many of the problems that Russia faced in terms of finances, implementing reforms that led to more effective collection of revenue and payment of military salaries. The Church became concerned by some of Catherine's reforms, including naming new officials to represent the Russian state in affairs involving land and the peasantry – areas over which the Church continued to exercise influence. While Catherine was not as devout as Peter the Great, she took after Peter in believing that the state should represent the Church. She knew she could use religion as her political tool when needed, and converted to the Orthodox religion at the time

²⁴ Catherine was a daughter of a minor German prince in Prussian service. She was shipped to Russia when she was fourteen years old to marry her cousin, Peter of Holstein Gottorp, who was fifteen years old and grandson of Peter I. He was the heir to the Russian throne. Isabel de Madariaga, *Catherine the Great: A Short History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 1.

of her marriage to Peter III.²⁵ Catherine made sure that her conversion to Orthodoxy was witnessed daily by her subjects to further her reputation in Russia.²⁶

She wanted to create new laws and reforms, and prepared a plan to gather officials from a variety of places in management who were responsible to her. This group of officials and Catherine would design recommendations for a reform of the laws of Russia in 1766. Her ambivalence toward religion showed in her choosing not to have the clergy represented at this crucial meeting. The Holy Synod, that Peter the Great made to oversee the Church, was simply summoned as part of the government. Catherine did not push for religious growth within Russia as even Peter did, but she continued to use it to her advantage.

Setting up her own candidate for king of Poland in 1764, she used religion to build her political party there. She gathered the support of Catholics, Protestants, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Russian Orthodox living in Poland. These religious minorities saw their rights gradually taken away, including the ability to elect officials and to hold high administrative, military or judicial offices.²⁷ Catherine claimed to want to eliminate religious prejudice in Poland, and did not force conversion on others. She sought to end religious discrimination, and promote toleration of Protestantism, Lutheranism, and Catholicism. Catherine was able to do these things, but her hold on the throne was not secure enough for her to make any extensive changes. Catherine's attentiveness gave her complete power and while she could not be like Peter I, she did pay attention to

²⁵ Madariaga, *Catherine the Great*, 23.

²⁶ Daniel H. Shubin, *A History of Russian Christianity: The Synodal Era and the Sectarians 1725 to 1894* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), 18, UNO online database.

²⁷ Catherine the Great pushed for religion toleration so she could gain the religious minorities' support. She did this not because she was religious but because she saw the political benefit of doing so. Madariaga, *Catherine the Great*, 43.

public opinion more than he did. She reorganized the country and made ways for religion to thrive and for people of different religions to live without fear of persecution.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century in Russia, there was a renewal of spirituality that cannot be attributed to the monarchs themselves. Restrictions placed upon the Church may have played a role in this new direction. The Church life increasingly was centralized in the monasteries which sought to uncover the "...spiritual values of life in this world."²⁸ The Church set out on this search with the intent of transforming the world and discovering meaning separate from the Russian state. This encouraged new demonstrations of faith in Orthodoxy. One result of this renewal of popular faith was the Russian people's belief in using prayer for the good of their country, again asserting the role of the faith in supporting the monarchy.

As these events occurred in Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England, meanwhile, was going through different religious and political changes. In the course of England's seventeenth century the Civil War and its aftermath led to the division of the Puritan practice that fought before to maintain itself in the Church of England, and undermined solidarity in England.²⁹ Also, as Glaser notes, in the seventeenth century tolerance was seen as a disruption of society and its structure.³⁰ In addition, Protestantism was said to have remained only through the

²⁸ Zenkovsky, "Russian Orthodoxy," 42.

²⁹ D. Szechi, "The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill: Volume 1 : Writing and Revolution in 17th Century England," *Essays in Review* 54, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 55.

³⁰ Eliane Glaser, "Tolerance and Intolerance: Studying the 17th Century reveals a lot about modern conceptions of toleration," *History Matters*, February 2014, 3.

English monarchy.³¹ James I stated that it was by his authority as a king and that the king's authority was from God and was only punishable to God. It has been shown that Charles I wanted to step back from the Calvinist traditions and impromptu prayers for traditions with pre-Reformation as its core.³²

The seventeenth century was a period of enormous change in England. It was a time of dwindling control of the Church of England and by the monarchy. There were practically four rulers who took power in England during this tumultuous century, establishing different relationships with religion and the Church. Charles I favored the Anglican Church, Oliver Cromwell abolished it, and Charles I and James II gave it new power. The century ended with William and Mary decreeing limited toleration for all Protestant sects other than Anglicanism, but rescinding any toleration for Catholicism.

After Elizabeth's death, James VI of Scotland became King James I of England in 1603. He was the opposite of Elizabeth I and looked favorably upon Calvinism due to his growing up in Scotland. He gave authority within the Church to those who shared his view point. He sincerely thought that kings had divine right from God and were only subject to God. During his reign, those opposed to the Calvinist belief in predestination popularized the view that God's grace was for all people, not a select few. The adherents of this belief, within Anglicanism, were called Arminians since their views were alike to the Dutch anti-Calvinist, Jacobus Arminius.

³¹ Leanda De Lisle, "NEITHER BLACK NOR WHITE: The myths that surround the ultimately tragic rule of Charles I mask the realities of a courageous and uxorious king who fell foul of a bitter struggle between two sides of English Protestantism," *History Today*, March 2018, 50.

³² De Lisle, "Neither Black nor White", 50.

During James I's reign, Arminians sought to counter the ideology of Calvinism. James I sought to keep a balance of various religious outlooks. He was not ready for the Arminians to speak out without reservation, for fear that the country would be pulled into doctrinal disputes. His fears were proven when in the early 1620s the so-called "Spanish Match" occurred, spurring the Calvinists to see it as a challenge to the existence of Protestant religion in England. Protests continued against James I's wishes and were supported by several of the clergy as well, potentially undermining James I's reign as well.³³ Indeed, an attempt was made by Guy Fawkes and his conspirators to blow up James I and parliament in the so-called "Gunpowder plot" of 1605 against the monarch and his attempts to restrict Catholicism and force priests to leave England. They wanted to create discontent and recreate a Catholic England. James I, as the ruler over England, Scotland, and Ireland, sought to exploit his position as the head of the 'Catholic and Reformed' Church of England, as well as his partnership with the Presbyterian Scots and episcopal English churches.³⁴ James I was not an Anglican king, but a Protestant one. He was however unable to enact the measures he desired because of the Thirty Years War.

Under the Tudors and James, the incoming monarch was held out as setting "...the religious direction of the nation."³⁵ The Caroline Religious settlement of 1625-1626 created an important change in the equilibrium of the English Church. Within a few months of Charles I's accession, anti-Calvinism rose in prominence and Charles I became the defender of the anti-Calvinist group. Relying upon Charles I's support, anti-Calvinists were able to rise and harden

³³ Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2005), 85.

³⁴ John Guy and John Morrill, *The Oxford History Of Britain: Volume III The Tudors and Stuarts*, ed. Kenneth O. Morgan (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 96-97.

³⁵ Cust, *Charles I*, 83.

their hold on the higher positions of the church. However, Calvinists were not ready to give up, even when, in the middle of the 1600s, new Instructions to the Clergy and other laws were created to hamper the Calvinists' ability to preach. This set the tone for the Church the next ten years.³⁶ Charles I went out of his way to hinder the power of Calvinists, his deep dislike for them apparently stemming from his belief that Calvinism was set on inciting rabble-rousing from others and subverting his divine right and authority.

Charles I's sense of his role as the protector of religion shaped his religious policy, which was geared toward returning to the golden time of the Church of England. He believed that the Reformation in England was at its peak during Elizabeth I's reign. He had the same high regard as the anti-Calvinists did as viewing the church as somewhere to feel God's holy presence. He made rounds to check on his country's cathedrals and churches while making changes to their layout and furniture. Charles I wanted to reinstate the tradition of kneeling at the communion table again, since it was a custom of the Elizabethan time. Charles I thought that the church and the people were intertwined. Charles I regarded the clergy as his allies in the process of instilling awe and respect into his subjects, and saw the clergy as maintaining respect for the crown. Charles I backed the clergy in their increase their tithes and aided them in their struggles with town businesses over legal rights. Whatever the clergy needed at that point, Charles I made sure they were properly equipped with the necessary support.

While Charles I was a supporter of the faith, he was essentially a stubborn man. This was not a good quality in a king who desired to create positive changes in England and wanted to restore the country to its former glory. One of the most striking features that he possessed was his

³⁶ Cust, *Charles I*, 94.

unwillingness to compromise once he believed that his conscience was clear and that what he was doing was for God. James I of England might have made a space for Calvinists, however Charles I was unrelenting in his decisions. His stubborn belief in his rectitude was what led to the Scottish prayer book rebellion, an uprising that was a response to the heavy correction of the copies of the Scottish prayer book. Married to a Catholic queen, Charles tried to restore a ‘Catholic feel’ to Anglicanism, favoring clerical authority ceremonies, candles, and vestments. Calvinists were outraged over this. Charles I desired to enforce conformity on his subjects and strived to put the clergy as the, “...intermediary between God and the people...”³⁷ In addition, Charles I used the altars of the Church as a further way to separate man and God and put ministers as the go-between.

In the late seventeenth century of England, Oliver Cromwell struck out against King Charles I’s religious policies. Cromwell became a deeply religious man during the 1640s. He believed that the Reformation that occurred during Elizabeth’s reign did not achieve its full potential. Cromwell thought it was imperative to create a new Reformation, and wanted to terminate Catholic procedures which he viewed as useless. In the ensuing Civil War, Oliver Cromwell made a name for himself during it by his continuous victories and demonstrations of faith. However, during the war, he became disillusioned with his comrades when he learned that they did not share the same belief that the king’s removal would bring the godly reformation that they desired. Cromwell realized that he needed to fight not just in the war, but in the political field as well after the end of the Civil War in 1646. Cromwell wanted a religious settlement that would

³⁷ Peter Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell* (Washington Square, New York: New York University Press, 2004) 31.

allow the freedom of thought, but was thwarted by the growing faction of Presbyterians that wanted a religious settlement that would provide a sole state church that everyone would conform to and giving the king full access to his powers that he had lost in the war.³⁸ Cromwell butted heads with them numerous times but was unable to prevail.

One of the parliamentary forces in England, the New Model Army, supported Cromwell's desire and was against the Presbyterian faction, who wanted to take away religious freedom. Relations between the two became strained and left Cromwell to calm the storm that began to brew. He told the New Model Army to write a draft with their own religious and constitution treaty and present it to the king and parliament. The draft the New Model Army issued, called the Heads of Proposals, envisioned, "...the old episcopal Church of England," except that no one had to obey it and there would be toleration for other Protestant minorities.³⁹ Cromwell's attempts to intervene between the New Model Army and parliament, show how he was better equipped for confrontation than negotiation. Charles I fled from where he was held imprisoned by the parliament which ended any idea of negotiating. However, this proved to be fruitful to Cromwell who believed that this showed God's will, and in 1653, he became head of state of England.

Upon becoming the head of state, Cromwell pursued his dream for a godly reformation in England. In 1654, Cromwell created and passed two decrees that would bring his dream closer at hand. The first decree governed the appointment of judges to oversee the clergy, to provide an assessment of character in short. The second decree produced a second panel of judges to find

³⁸ Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell*, 59.

³⁹Gaunt, *Oliver Cromwell*, 65.

the clergy who were unfaithful and unfit and dismiss them. The two decrees entailed an elimination process that ensured Cromwell's power.

Cromwell's godly reformation was not characterized by tolerance though. Cromwell had a narrow view of what religious freedom meant. He believed that, "...Protestant unity within the national Church..." was the ideal godly reformation.⁴⁰ Cromwell envisioned a nation where it was more in line with the Church of Elizabeth I and James I. Nevertheless, Cromwell allowed different religions to exist in England which no other Britain administrations had managed to allow.⁴¹ England under Cromwell became a safe place for anyone under religious persecution to come and enjoy religious freedom, allowing them to practice their own religion in private without fear of persecution and judgement.

In the eighteenth century, the scientific revolution characterized by experimentation and observations of the laws of nature, took shape. Foundations for the Scientific Revolution were set by thinkers like .Scientific discoveries accelerated, as Isaac Newton described the laws of gravity and Robert Boyle, another scientist, discovered the gas laws underpinning the creation of the air pump. These thinkers' and others' discoveries created a secularization which caused people to lose their connection with religion.

Such transformations underpinned changes within the Church as well. In the eighteenth century, monarchs found it more difficult to bring together science and religion. In the eighteenth century, the populace of England turned in a new direction of religious change. John Wesley was the son of a reverend and his parents raised him in the Christian faith. His religious search began

⁴⁰ Barry Coward, *Oliver Cromwell* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 110.

⁴¹Coward, *Cromwell*, 111.

as a student in Oxford where he and his fellow students performed severe practices in their faith.⁴² They went without sleep or food and would go into the woods at night with only the skin on their backs.

In 1738, Wesley found faith and was baptized as an Anglican and remained so afterward. He attempted to work within the Church, but to no avail. Wesley sought new audiences for his message of Christian reform. Methodism quickly took root in England. Methodists were part of the Church because as followers of Wesley they were expected to be Anglicans. However the Anglican hierarchy remained confrontational toward Wesley and pushed him into forming Methodism as a separate movement from the Church.

In 1784, three-hundred and fifty six Methodist chapels were built in areas that did not have churches. Methodist groups began to spring forth across England., strictly divided by gender and following strict devotional practices.⁴³ Everything was carefully regulated by Wesley himself, who owned all the buildings and land that they resided in. Wesley did not share Calvinistic belief in pre-destination. He had faith in salvation and the rebirth. Methodism sought to delve into the core of man and bring release from tragedy and a sense of purpose. Methodism captivated the common people since it allowed them to satisfy their need of strength and responsibility.

Methodism had a downside to it though. Rationality was absent at its center. Wesley thought witches, the Devil and possession by demons were all real. He opened his Bible at random and based his decisions on the first words that he read. Wesley thought the Bible was ample

⁴²J. H Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990), 92.

⁴³ They practiced collective confession, prayer, and examining one's soul. Plumb, *England*, 93.

education for anyone and that child labor was a necessity because of his belief of not having a person's life for even a minute. He and his flock were content to be with like-minded people who shared their values. Methodism reshaped the English people based on their monetary needs and circumstances.

This comparative study of religious practice in Russia and England sheds light on on the different ways that the Russian and English monarchies handled religion and in what ways they changed it. In Russia, the monarchs focused on changing the form of religion. The monarchy in Russia saw the benefits that they would gain through such changes. Russia remained as it was largely due to the administration that was built by Peter the Great. He sought to curtail a religious administration that might be seen as separate from the authority of the state and give the impression of being more successful than the monarch himself.

By contrast, the English monarchy centered on the substantive change to their religion. They used their position to change the worship practices that shaped popular attitudes toward religion. Whoever ruled swayed the direction in which religion went, especially in its ties to the populace in England. This contrast sprung from wider circumstances surrounding the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries — including the Schism in Russia and, in England, the Civil War and the growth of science — that were also factors in how religion was received. More broadly, people outside of the monarchy affected how religion progressed in both countries. Whether it was Nikon of Russia, John Wesley, or Oliver Cromwell, they impacted some form of how religion was managed. While the official religion in England still remained, popular focus wavered, and many came to follow a different faith than the one that was endorsed by the monarchy in

England. In Russia, the official religion was always the main one that people followed, though there were people who followed the older traditions of Orthodoxy.

Religious matters remained a central focus in both countries, forming a part of the people's identity and how they lived everyday life. In England and Russia, religion was enough of a force to drive people to war or for those in power to use as a tool. The monarchy in Russia used religion to further their agendas or to keep their official religion as a tool to keep the subjects under their control. In England, the monarchy did not simply use religion as a tool for their agendas but rather created agendas that centered on their religion. The monarchy in England sought to use their power to make the religious changes they desired. Though their goals diverged, in both England and Russia religion remained at the center of monarchical strategies throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

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