

up frequent and regular correspondence. Just as at the time of the first persecutions of the Church, so now these letters are passed from hand to hand, from village to village, and from province to province until they become worn and almost illegible. One of these letters, addressed to the Church at T——, a little village of the province of Kiev, begins thus : "To the well-beloved in Christ, brothers and sisters of the church at T——, salutation." Then follows the exhortation : "Take care, brethren, that your church, which for ten years has made its voice heard like a trumpet, be not silenced now." In another letter, addressed to the church at P——, the brethren are exhorted : "Gird up your loins in view of the great conflict, for the enemy rejoices over your feebleness. Take care that your elders are men of good repute, and do not forget the poor and the oppressed when you assemble about the Lord's table."

Let us penetrate into the interior of one of these communities. They have no special building for their services. "Poverty, simplicity, and austerity distinguish the meeting-places of the Stundists." They meet in the house of some peasant, in a room scrupulously neat, which on Sabbath morning is cleared in haste of its beds, furniture, and provisions. On the whitewashed walls hang two or three Scripture texts, on the earthen floor rude benches and chairs are placed. At the end of the room stands a little table, covered with a white cloth, and a chair for the preacher. On the table rest a Bible and a collection of hymns, many of which are from the English.

Reading and explanation of some New Testament passage occupies the principal place in the service, but singing also plays a large part. The "little Russians" have a highly developed musical sense. All strangers who attend the meetings of the Stundists are struck with the beauty of their songs. Many of their original hymns are very remarkable. The Stundists kneel in prayer and pray much. They pray often for the Emperor ; their prayers are long, and frequently accompanied by tears, and are characterized, above all, by great humility, while they use their hymns to express their joy in Christ.

Here is a description given by an eye-witness of one of their assemblies : "They salute each other with hand-shakes and embraces, the men kissing the men and the women the women. Then they sit down, the men on one side, the women on the other. The elder takes his place at the table and gives out a chant. He then reads and explains a chapter in the Bible, and gives an opportunity for any one else to add a word of explanation. Women are not permitted to teach, but following 1 Cor. 11 : 5, they are permitted to pray in meeting. After several hymns and prayers, the elder closes the service with a sermon."

They celebrate the Lord's Supper as do the Protestant churches of the West. It is customary for the Stundists to linger after service and exchange news and read letters from their friends in prison or exile.

A Stundist marriage is celebrated in the following manner : On the