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Feofan Prokopovich: from theology to politics

Summary: Prokopovich began his ecclesiastical career as a lecturer of the Kiev academy where he taught many subjects and left extensive lecture published posthumously in a multivolume *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*. The paper presents some of his views concerning the defense of the authority of the Bible and the need for its literal interpretation; some positive characterizations of God's attributes; the creation and the makeup of the world; the position of man in the universe; and the problem of eschatology. After Prokopovich was summoned by Peter I to St. Petersburg, he gradually abandoned theology and philosophy and concentrated on political issues and on justification of submitting the church to the power of the state. This culminated in the *Spiritual regulation* which spelled the end of an independent church in Russia.

Keywords: church and state relationship, Orthodox theology, Peter I, Prokopovich.

Feofan Prokopovich was one of the most important figures in the history of the Russian church. His name evokes two sentiments. He was well-educated, well-read, a brilliant theologian and philosopher, a very effective writer and preacher, a promoter of science and active participant in the development of the education system in Russia. On the other hand, he was instrumental in subjugating the church under the state's rule as Peter I's theological henchman, working indefatigably to justify this subjugation, authoring many nauseatingly servile speeches adulating every aspect of Peter I's activity.[1]

Eleazar Prokopovich was born in 1681, studied in the Kiev Academy, and continued his studies in schools in Poland and in Rome during which time, for education's expediency, he became a Uniate monk with the name of Elisei. After his return, in 1705, he became an Orthodox monk and took the name of Theofan/Feofan. At that time, he became a lecturer of the Kiev academy where he taught rhetoric, poetics, theology, philosophy, physics, and mathematics. He left extensive lecture notes, some of which were published only several decades after his death in a multivolume *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*. During his tenure in the Academy, he wrote a play, *Vladimir*,

[1] In the tone of his speeches, however, he was not alone as testified by speeches of, for example, Stefan Iavorskii and Gavriil Buzhinskii.

to illustrate the use of Russian, rather than antique, themes in art. In 1707 he became a prefect of the Academy, the second person in the Academy after the rector, and in 1711, he became the rector of the Academy and professor of theology. In 1716, he was summoned by Peter I to Saint Petersburg to help the tsar in enforcing new policies concerning the relationship between the church and the state.

At the beginning of the 18th century, the memories of the patriarch Nikon (1605–1681) were fairly fresh. Nikon had made a strong-willed attempt to elevate the status of the church during the reign of tsar Alexis (1629–1676, he ruled since 1645). This action would have meant reducing the position of the tsar. However, the attempt did not fare well for the church since it led to a schism inside the Orthodox church and, eventually, to the demise of Nikon himself. However, the attempt was sufficiently strong to convince tsar Peter I that the position of the church must be clearly subdued to the power of the state, i.e., the tsar himself. Prokopovich was instrumental in bringing about this submission. However, he started initially as a talented scholar, erudite philosopher and theologian devoted to teaching and writing.

1. The Biblical authority

The highest authority for Prokopovich was the Bible; only the Bible should be the principle of theology since it is the word of God, His letter to people, as it were.[2] The Bible is the source not only of religious and theological knowledge, but also of physical knowledge. Therefore, for example, it is wrong that some follow Aristotle in their belief of the eternity of heaven, "as if the Holy Scripture should serve philosophy and not philosophy [should serve] the Holy Scripture, as if the authority of Aristotle were greater than God's".[3] However, Biblical arguments, Prokopovich believed, should not be used indiscriminantly. In making a philosophical argument, philosophical reasoning should be used: "it would be improper for a philosopher to prove his argumentation with history and the proof of the Holy Scripture".[4] Apparently, Biblical principles can and should be used to form philosophical principles, but philosophical argumentation should somehow be confined to philosophical ground only. However, natural philosophy, that is, natural sciences have their place in helping man to acquire knowledge as well, and "even the most renowned pillars

[2] T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, Leipzig 1782, vol. 1, p. 11, 17, 25; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, in his *Сочинения*, Москва 1880, vol. 5, p. 72, 73.

[3] Ф. Прокопович, *Натурфілософія, або фізика*, in his *Філософські твори*, Київ 1979–1981, vol. 2, p. 339.

[4] Ф. Прокопович, *Рассуждение о нетлении людей святых и угодников божиих, в киевских пещерах нетленно почивающих*, Москва 1786; В.М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, Москва 1977, p. 35.

of the Church advocate study also of the physical world".[5] The investigation of nature can and does provide knowledge of God, since "only by means of physical observations we can know God who judges people according to their merits. God reveals them the knowledge of the world in his works and shows his eternal power which is in his words and which creates everything".[6] "To speak about God – is the task of theology (…) but a physicist can also say something about God (…) but not in the sense, what attributes he has, but in the sense that he is a prime mover, the cause of all motion which takes place in this world of material things, [and is] so worthy of admiration".[7] Physics can do much to know the Bible better. For example, as physics teaches, in nature, the oak is, in a way, in an acorn, a chicken is in an egg, so it should not be absurd that Christ is in a small piece of the communion bread.[8]

It is one thing to treat the Bible as the highest authority, while it is another thing to interpret its statements. This is important when the Bible is confronted with the data provided by science, as in the case of the mobility of the earth. The Bible speaks about an immobile earth being in the center of the universe, but this statement can be taken metaphorically[9] just as the statement that God is strolling.[10] Also, "the sun and the moon are called large lights, although the moon, as [the astronomers] teach, is smaller than all planets except for Mercury (…) Therefore, Moses spoke not according to the research of astronomers, but according to the normal way of speaking, and the Holy Scripture makes similar errors in many cases".[11] The reference to "errors in the Scripture" was quite precarious considering that fact that it could have led to the stake, as it was the case with Quirinus Kuhlmann.[12] It is one thing to state that the Bible should be interpreted allegorically, at least in some cases, and another thing to state that it is filled with errors.

It was obvious to Prokopovich that metaphoric interpretation should be included when approaching the Bible. However, what should be interpreted literally, what metaphorically? He criticized scholastic allegoric interpretation of the Bible, this "harmful pestilence of misuse," and recommended literal meaning. Allegorists, in his view, "laugh at simpletons who understand all speech the way it was written. They transform each word in any and which way and chasing a secret meaning they pollute the obvious" meaning.[13] He stressed

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[5] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный реглямент*, in: П. В. Верховской, *Учреждение Духовной коллегии и Духовный регламент*, Ростов-на-Дону 1916, vol. 2, p. 1.52; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation of Peter the Great*, Seattle 1972, p. 31.

[6] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 117.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 270.

[8] *Ibidem*, p. 118.

[9] *Ibidem*, p. 368.

[10] *Ibidem*, p. 369.

[11] *Ibidem*, p. 305.

[12] В. Г. Смирнов, *Феофан Прокопович*, Москва 1994, p. 44.

[13] T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 1, 140–141; П. Морозов, *Феофан Прокопович как писатель*, Санкт-Петербург 1880, p. 131, 108.

the use of context for proper understanding and comparison with similar uses. "Anyone can concoct silly allegories, even the most unbelieving street charlatan".[14] It appears, then, that metaphoric interpretation should be tried as the last resort, when literal meaning is impossible to maintain.

The final decision concerning the interpretation of the Bible belongs to the seven ecumenical councils which shed proper light on the Biblical statements. Therefore, the Bible by itself is not sufficient for an Orthodox believer, and the Protestant *sola scriptura* doctrine, although sometimes endorsed by Prokopovich, is ultimately rejected by him. He agreed with the Orthodox teaching that "the properly held ecumenical councils are infallible and most certain principles of faith".[15]

Although the Bible is the highest authority, with unbelievers in his mind, Prokopovich tried to prove veracity of the Bible with rational means. In his view, there are four types of proofs that can be provided: 1. the fulfillment of Biblical prophecies, 2. the signs and miracles performed for confirmation of teaching, 3. the powerful spreading of Christianity, and 4. the recognition of the Bible even by enemies of its message.[16]

Also, the laws of logic seem to trump the Biblical statements. According to Prokopovich, "even if God himself constructed a syllogism against some dogma of the Gospel and showed that it is true and the most correct, I would say that it is right that, for this reason, the Gospel itself is wrong".[17] This may be considered a purely hypothetical, albeit, religiously, somewhat perilous statement, because, in reality, the Bible never contradicted syllogistic reasoning. After all, the omniscient God inspired the Bible, and He would not have used reasoning that is false.

2. God

The source of all being is God. Only God exists by necessity, so much so, that He may not expunge His own existence: "Only God is so necessary that he does not depend on any other cause and he cannot not exist even if he wanted to".[18] God existed "before the existence of the world (…) as the most perfect reason"[19] and before "in time, out of nothing creation of all things was performed (…) all

[14] T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 1, p. 158; П. Морозов, *Феофан Прокопович как писатель*, p. 132.

[15] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, Wratislaviae 1744, p. 52; T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 1, 267–269; Ю.Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 86–89.

[16] T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 1, 27; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 75–76.

[17] Ф. Прокопович, *Логіка*, in his *Філософські твори*, Київ 1979–1981, vol. 2, p. 109.

[18] *Ibidem*, p. 90.

[19] Ф. Прокопович, *Рассуждение о безбожии*, Москва 1774, p. 11; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 21.

these things always existed in his reason, as archetypes, that is, primal images".[20] As befits God, He is eternal, infinite, omnipotent, and omniscient. However, these attributes do not adequately reflect His being, or, rather, because of the human limitations, we do not fully grasp the true meaning of these attributes. More adequate knowledge is in negative terms – God is not light nor darkness, not flesh – than when using positive terms: omnipotent, omniscient, best. Although these are truths, we do not know them as they are[21] since "with human reason we cannot comprehend the essence of eternal and uncreated nature" of God.[22] In this, Prokopovich followed the spirit of the apophatic theology of the Orthodox faith. However, limited as the knowledge in positive terms is, Prokopovich very frequently characterized God in these terms.

From God's infinity and omnipotence it follows that 1. because an infinite power corresponds to infinite effect, God can create an infinity of things; 2. because God knows, He can create; He knows that an infinity of things are possible, so He can create an infinity of things; 3. wherever God is, He can create anything; since He is in infinity of places, He can create an infinity of things.[23] God can endow a creation with an infinite perfection, even in the presence of an infinity of created things. Would God be omnipotent if He could not create an infinity of things, infinite magnitude, or infinite perfection? He can create an infinity of things at the same time, not necessarily one after another.[24] However, according to Prokopovich, God cannot create an infinite amount of entities, one more perfect than the next and, at the same time, make man most perfect.[25] First, Prokopovich explicitly stated that God is perfect;[26] thus, the hierarchy of perfections does allow the highest perfection, but it can be stated that God is an uncreated perfection and others are created, and, as such, they are lesser perfections than the perfection of God. However, even an infinity of created perfections does not exclude the highest created perfection. This possibility can be shown with the aid of Zeno's bisection argument: there is the first perfection, then a perfection greater from the previous by a half, then a perfection greater from the previous by a half and thus greater from the first by three fourths, the next greater from the previous by a half and thus greater from the very first by seven eighths, the next – by fifteen sixteenths, etc., so that the perfection which is twice as perfect as the very first would be the highest although there is an infinity of lower perfections.[27]

[20] Ф. Прокопович, *Рассуждение о безбожии*, p. 13; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 21.

[21] Ф. Прокопович, *Натурфілософія*, p. 130.

[22] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, 259.

[23] Ф. Прокопович, *Натурфілософія*, p. 205.

[24] *Ibidem*, p. 206.

[25] *Ibidem*, p. 204.

[26] *Ibidem*, p. 319.

[27] Prokopovich referred to Zeno of Elea when discussing the problem of continuum, although he confused him with Zeno of Citium (Натурфілософія, p. 220). Elsewhere, he did mention Zeno of Elea (*Логіка*, p. 56).

Prokopovich discussed proofs for the existence of God and relied on them. There are eight such proofs: the proof from the existence of the world; from the existence of man; from the presence of an inborn moral law; from the voice of conscience; from the omnipresence of the idea of God among people; from the necessity of the first cause; from the rational organization of nature; and from the immutability of Biblical truths and the astounding Biblical prophecies.[28] Interestingly, he did not present Anselm's ontological proof.[29] It seems that he found the cosmological proof and the proof from design most convincing. He wrote that "the greatest and most obvious proof that the world did not arise accidentally (…) but was created by some wisest and, at the same time, the most powerful creator, is the size of this world, its beauty, diversity, structure, different kinds of things (…) [and] the harmony of all things". Just as Homer's poems did not arise from putting together chaotically scattered letters, so the world did not arise from a chaotic motion of atoms.[30] Also, in his play *Vladimir*, when Vladimir asked the philosopher how we know that an invisible God exists, the answer was that even the Greeks knew that God exists when they considered the presence in the world of so many things that work together harmoniously toward one goal: "the lights have their paths, waters know their shores, the earth knows its times, fruits come from it, each of them in right time. Seeing this, philosophers decided: 'impossible for these things to be without a principle/beginning and necessary rule. But someone created that, maintains, and does not allow to fall apart, and structures with wise design: that task is fitting for God,'" one God, since the principle can only be one, stated Prokopovich through the philosopher.[31]

3. The world

The world is God's handiwork, created out of nothing[32] in six days as described in the book of Genesis, although not all details are provided there. This is where natural sciences can help theologians, Prokopovich believed, although he also heavily relied on philosophy. First of all, he accepted the peripatetic-scholastic distinction between matter and form as constitutive elements of material reality. All bodies have a common substrate although it cannot be perceived by the senses.[33] God first created matter, and its amount has not changed since then, so that no new first matter is born nor is the existing matter destroyed; it cannot grow

[28] В. Г. Смирнов, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 55. "The richness of scientific material and strong logical reasoning make this part one of the best parts in all treatises (i.e., in *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*)," Ф. Тихомиров, *Трактаты Феофана Прокоповича о Боге едином по существу и троичном в Лицах*, Санкт-Петербург 1884, p. 19.

[29] В.М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 24.

[30] Ф. Прокопович, *Натурфілософія*, p. 292.

[31] Ф. Прокопович, *Сочинения*, p. 182.

[32] *Ibidem*, p. 151.

[33] *Ibidem*, p. 128.

or decrease.[34] Matter is the potency and, by nature, it has to accept forms, which are an act,[35] one form in one part of matter.[36] In the Cartesian spirit, he stated that "we grasp all matter in the analysis of its essence as extension in every direction, that is, as having breadth, length, depth, height and other figures".[37] The distinction between matter and form is of ontological nature since, in nature, they are so intricately connected that matter cannot exist without form, even by God's will.[38] It is thus a self-imposed limitation, since it is, after all, God who created nature that way. In this design, God also follows a principle ascribed to God by Prokopovich that "it would contradict the divine providence if some, even the smallest thing in this world would be empty and inactive and without any application"[39] – which is an adopted Aristotelian principle that nature does nothing in vain.

God so arranged the world that when something is born, something is destroyed to provide matter for the new body; when something dies, then immediately something else emerges so that matter does not remain bare, without a form, which would be impossible by its nature.[40] This is the way things have been since the moment of creation. Therefore, when the Bible says that, at first, the earth was without form, that should be understood in such a way – as Prokopovich stated after Basil – that God did create matter at the same time as forms since before the actual creation, God thought in His spirit what to create and thought about what the world should be and made at the same time matter that coexists with its form.[41] The argument is far from convincing, because this does mean that matter can exist in separation from the form – in spite of philosophical argumentation – but the discussion of the problem is dismissed by the statement that to say otherwise is heretical.[42]

Where do the forms come from? This is a great mystery of nature.[43] It is clear that a new form comes not from matter but from the form of the active cause.[44] However, it is still unresolved exactly how new forms are generated.[45] If we don't know something, then we admit that we don't know it. Better to admit ignorance than to invent explanations. Prokopovich simply admitted his inability to provide a satisfactory philosophical explanation of the problem of origin of forms.[46]

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[34] *Ibidem*, p. 129.
[35] *Ibidem*, p. 130.
[36] *Ibidem*, p. 129.
[37] Ф. Прокопович, *Рассуждение о безбожии*, p. 22; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 48.
[38] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 132.
[39] *Ibidem*, p. 132.
[40] *Ibidem*, p. 129.
[41] *Ibidem*, p. 133.
[42] *Ibidem*, p. 134.
[43] *Ibidem*, p. 135.
[44] *Ibidem*, p. 140.
[45] *Ibidem*, p. 141.
[46] *Ibidem*, p. 142.

There is no void in the world and thus "there cannot be any place without a body in it".[47] On the other hand, "an angel is a spirit, he has no relation to the material space and thus in the place in which it is, it is not alone, but along with a corporeal entity".[48] The same stands for the soul in the human body. However, God can cause that even two bodies can simultaneously exist in the same place by interpenetration;[49] this is exemplified by the Biblically testified fact that Christ exited the grave without rolling the stone and that He entered a room although the door was closed.[50] Which leads us to the problem of miracles, which is connected with the problem of causality.

God is the first cause as the creator of the universe, but God should not be understood in the deistic fashion as the creator who withdrew from His creation after bringing the world into being. God is an immediate preserving cause of all things; otherwise, everything would turn into nothingness.[51] However, when creating the world, God saw to it that nothing can arise without His help, and He decided to give all things their own natural preservation power. This power is of different strength in different things.[52] As Prokopovich emphasized, without God's maintenance, the world would immediately perish;[53] nothing can be born and be created without God's help; no creation can exist without God's support, and no creation can do anything without God's help. This constant support is not only the reflection of God's providence but also of His omnipotence, since if "God[']s activity] did not coincide with other causes, this would imply that he cannot obstruct them if he wanted to, unless by application of opposition".[54] That is, miracles are possible because God is in the constant control of the workings of natural causes, and the application of these causes can at any moment be suspended. This seems to contradict Prokopovich's statement that "God does not contradict himself and he in no way changes his already established laws".[55] This may mean that miracles are results of rare coincidence of a few natural laws thus resulting in a rare phenomenon. This may also mean that God does not change a particular law, but He withdraws His support to maintain the workings of that particular law, thereby, as it were, annihilating it for a moment so that a miracle may be produced. This may be the way to understand a somewhat cryptic explanation that God allows fibers to burn since "if he did not allow it, that they are destroyed, then he himself would violate his own law. If he actually did it, he would do it in a natural way

[47] *Ibidem*, p. 256.
[48] *Ibidem*, p. 239.
[49] *Ibidem*, p. 244.
[50] *Ibidem*, p. 245.
[51] *Ibidem*, p. 162.
[52] *Ibidem*, p. 165.
[53] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 261.
[54] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 167.
[55] Ф. Прокопович, *Рассуждение о нетлении…*, p. 85; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 38.

– since to do it supernaturally means entering the domain of miracles – which is not a violation of his law, but is only its particular application".[56]

Through His support of the workings of natural laws, God has an intimate contact with the world. Nothing can truly work on its own unless supported by God. There is, as it were, a constant influx of divine energy that keeps the world going, and the course of the world can at any moment be changed at God's pleasure. God does not perform any change randomly or whimsically; therefore, the natural laws can usually be trusted, but, by the divine will, they can be suspended, which results in a miraculous event. Miracles thus are a reality, but they are exceptional events. Hence, "nothing can blindly be ascribed to a supernatural act of God except for the [events] about which we are firmly convinced that they cannot be counted as normal".[57]

Natural explanation thus should be attempted first, but not always should it be stubbornly pursued. Prokopovich discussed at length the phenomenon of the preservation in Kievan caves of bodies of saintly personages. He concluded that the fact that the bodies did not disintegrate was not a natural phenomenon.[58] What is not caused by natural causes is caused by God. Imperishability of these bodies is not caused by good works, but by God.[59] We cannot know why God preserved these bodies but not others, since God's thoughts are too profound for us.[60] Interestingly, the phenomenon was apparently also testified by the preservation of bodies of those who stubbornly resisted the light of faith. The preservation was due, according to Prokopovich, to the activity of evil spirits, who acted according to God's will to bind the soul of the obstinate to show the power of the priest after whose prayer the body disintegrated and the soul was released.[61]

Prokopovich used the peripatetic teaching concerning the elementary materials from which the world is built, although some details are not altogether clear. He stated that there are five bodily substances (material elements): heaven, earth, water, fire, and air.[62] These five elements were created during the first day of creation when the phrase that "God created the heaven and the earth" is properly interpreted. According to Prokopovich, the heaven in this phrase includes air and heavenly fire, and the earth includes water.[63] What Prokopovich seems to have meant by heaven as an element is aether. "As required by nature of each [element], God placed earth in the lowest place, then water which surrounded the earth, then air, and above air he placed heavenly fire".[64] Where is

[56] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 165–166.
[57] *Ibidem*, p. 404.
[58] *Ibidem*, p. 422; cf. С. Яворский, *Камень веры*, Киев 1730, p. 292.
[59] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 423.
[60] *Ibidem*, p. 424.
[61] *Ibidem*, p. 433; T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 118–119.
[62] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 284.
[63] *Ibidem*, p. 301.
[64] *Ibidem*, p. 301–302.

aether? He stated that the heat of aether is of the same kind as the heat of fire,[65] but, confusedly, he also seems to have identified rare air with heavenly aether.[66] Moreover, he reported that some speak about aether which is in the empyrean heaven.[67] There are seven moving heavenly spheres for seven planets and the sphere of stars is immovable. There may be an immovable empyrean – the place for the saved souls – beyond the eighth sphere, the sphere of stars, as claimed by the church fathers, although there is no Biblical support for it.[68] Also, the New Testament speaks about the third heaven. The first heaven may be the space up to the sphere of the moon, the second – all the spheres, the third – the empyrean.[69] Unlike for Aristotle, for Prokopovich the heavenly spheres were made from fire since he mentioned three airy spheres, out of which the highest reaches the fiery or the first heavenly sphere.[70] He insisted that matter of heaven is not different from matter of the sublunary realm. Since God does things in the simplest way, as also stated by Aristotle, why use two different types of matter for the entire universe?[71] For this reason, the heavens are mutable.[72] However, since heaven is used in different senses by Prokopovich, when he meant heaven as a separate element, he may have meant only aether which fills only the empyrean whose existence he hesitatingly accepted. Would aether, as the material filling the dwelling place of souls, be of different nature than the four material elements? If so, it should have a nature fitting the nature of souls; it should be some kind of spiritual material. Since souls are created beings, the spiritual dwelling place for them could also have been created from the material suitable to the nature of souls.

4. Man

The harmony and grandeur of nature are also fully present in man, at least in man before the fall.[73] "All advantages distributed in nature only in him are concentrated and he is another world equal to the entire nature, if not in magnitude, then in perfection".[74] Man is a corporeal and spiritual being, the being

[65] *Ibidem*, p. 157.

[66] *Ibidem*, p. 348.

[67] *Ibidem*, p. 303.

[68] According to Stefan Iavorskii's lectures, the universe consisted of the earth, air, the sphere of fire, the sphere of planets, heavenly waters, and the immobile empyrean – the place of God, И. С. Захара, *Борьба идей в философской мысли на Украине на рубеже XVII-XVIII вв. (Стефан Яворский)*, Киев 1982, p. 86.

[69] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 327.

[70] *Ibidem*, p. 384.

[71] *Ibidem*, p. 322.

[72] *Ibidem*, p. 323.

[73] T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 2, p. 214; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 97.

[74] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 260.

that possesses a soul which God endowed with freedom and reason.[75] These are the highest human faculties, since the image and likeness of God in man lie in reason and free will.[76] This freedom and rationality make man the crown of God's creation and thus, "those who ascribe reason to animals are themselves deprived of it". If animals had reason, then they would be free since these two faculties – reason and freedom –are interconnected, but this is not the case. Why endow with reason a being that has no free will? Animals are not free; if they had been, they would have deserved praise for good works and they would have been responsible for their misdeeds. The irrationality of animals can be seen in their specialization; for example, spiders can only weave a web and do that in only one way. Man is not so limited.[77] This specialization argument has also been used by Descartes in arguing in his *Discourse on method* that animals are sentient machines.

Animals are not devoid of any mental faculties. They act because of the built-in instinct; however, instinct is the work of opinion or imagination designed to indicate suitability of something and to determine the desire to escape a danger. This opinion is "a kind of blind imitation of the human reason". Thus, when a woodpecker looks for a particular type of grass, "it is prompted not by an image of grass that it did not see yet with any sensory organ, but by opinion, which guides its flight".[78] It is puzzling what the mechanism of such guidance can be. If an image is not a guide, and the opinion does not contain any images, how can it lead a bird to a particular place where a particular object can be found? Apparently, the needs of animals are so specialized that the faculty of opinion somehow encodes all of them and is able to direct an animal to a place which fits the encoded responses to its needs. Apparently, when a bird needs some kind of grass, an internal GPS system is automatically activated that leads the bird to the nearest source of the grass.

The soul is the principle of life and also the principle of motion; that is, only living beings are self-moved,[79] and a soulless body cannot move by itself. The soul is a spiritual, nonmaterial entity, and yet an interaction of body and soul is possible so that some thoughts in the mind result from motions of the body and some motions of the body from thoughts.[80] This is done through the animal spirits that are emitted from the brain and used by the soul to control nerves and arteries.[81]

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[75] *Ibidem*, p. 281; Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 2, p. 188; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 92.

[76] Ф. Прокопович, *Натурфілософія*, p. 309; Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина с селянином да певцем или дячком церковным*, in: П. В. Верховской, *Учреждение Духовной коллегии и Духовный регламент*, vol. 2, 3.58–59; T. Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 2, p. 196–199; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 94.

[77] Ф. Прокопович, Натурфілософія, p. 186.

[78] *Ibidem*, p. 187.

[79] *Ibidem*, p. 275.

[80] *Ibidem*, p. 117.

[81] *Ibidem*, p. 273.

Immateriality of the soul must be kept in mind when approaching some philosophical problems of the mind-body interaction. For example, if it is said that the entire soul is in the entire body and the entire soul in all its parts, then when raising one hand and moving down another hand, the entire soul rises and moves down at the same time.[82] However, the soul, which is the spirit devoid of matter, has no relation to the motion of the body and does not require the different places for mutually opposed motions. There is no left or right in the soul, no before or after, but something can only be close to it or distant from it; and because "the inherent simplicity of the soul excludes such differences regarding space, the spirit as a whole can be observed from all sides". Therefore, when hands are moved, "the soul does not move (…) and is not a subject of bodily motion, and it changes place by some internal impulse that is proper to its nature. We do not know and are unable to understand this impulse just as [we are unable to understand] most of other wonders of immaterial nature (…) like, for instance, whether the entire soul is in the whole body and, separately, in organs".[83] The mind-body interaction obviously exists, but the nature of this interaction is bound to remain obscure to us. This, presumably, is because having the insight into spiritual truths is impeded by the carnal side of humans. It is worth noting that, without discussing it, Prokopovich referred to the simplicity of the soul, which was not quite relevant in the context of spatial localization of the soul (more relevant is the statement that the spirit does not have magnitude the way bodies do[84]). However, the simplicity of the soul was traditionally important in arguments for immortality of the soul, beginning with Plato.

God is a providential God, maintaining the existence and workings of the mechanism of the world, which poses a problem with the existence of sin. According to Prokopovich, God acts with people, but He is not responsible for their sins. This is because "God acts through causes and not through His own being (…) and secondary causes do only by his instruction and command what is needed. For instance, it is said that the earthly masters act through their subjects, which means that the primary cause is acting along with secondary [causes]. God would act directly if he acted entirely independently like he did when creating the world".[85] "Secondary causes act by their own power given them by God, although this power cannot act without God's support".[86] The explanation seems to be made at the cost of the proximity of God to the world. In Plato, the Demiurge submitted continuation of his creation to the gods and then withdrew from the world. In Prokopovich, God submitted the continuation of the creation of or molding of the world to secondary causes which

[82] *Ibidem*, p. 198.
[83] *Ibidem*, p. 199.
[84] *Ibidem*, p. 225.
[85] *Ibidem*, p. 169.
[86] *Ibidem*, p. 170.

were infused with the power of acting. Did He withdraw from the world? It seems that Prokopovich, not to fall into deism, wanted the constant presence of God in the world. The claim can be defended by stating that God maintains the world not by His direct action in each event in world, but by maintaining the workings of natural laws. How these laws are applied by rational beings – by humans – is up to them, up to their free choice and their wisdom. God is in direct charge of maintaining the laws but allows people to misapply and misuse them and in that sense, He is not responsible for the sin, although there would have been no sin if He had not kept the mechanism of the world going.

5. This world and the next

The goal of human activity is happiness.[87] The good is what is suitable to someone.[88] "Since man consist of the soul and the body, then in order to be happy, the state of both of them has to be good. Therefore, he has to have excellent reason, immaculate will, and have a healthy body, under which name [– health –] should be understood orderliness and beauty".[89] "Human happiness consists in the perfect abundance of what is needed and pleasant for living. This includes, in particular, comfort, beauty and pleasantness of the place [where we live], wholesome air, healthy food, the fertility of earth, etc".[90] That is, material needs have to be reasonably met, including living comfortably in a healthy environment and relying on the abundance of the fruit of the earth. More importantly, spiritual needs have to be met as well. This includes good education of all children. That Prokopovich treated education very seriously is testified by a school he established and supported from his own pocket in which 160 orphans and poor children were educated[91] and by his active involvement in the development of the Academy of science that was established in 1724.[92]

Happiness is the goal of this life, but even more so, happiness is the goal of the afterlife. In the traditional Orthodox way, Prokopovich saw two possible avenues for the departed: eternal salvation or eternal perdition. There is no middle way, and no purgatory.[93] The prospect of either the heavenly abode or hellish destination is real, final, and everlasting. Heaven is eternal and so is hell, notwithstand-

[87] Ф. Прокопович, *Етика*, in his *Філософські твори*, Київ 1979–1981, vol. 2, p. 507, 509.

[88] *Ibidem*, p. 510.

[89] Ф. Прокопович, *Богословское учение о состоянии неповрежденного человека или о том, каков был Адам в раю*, Москва 1785, p. 1–2; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 138.

[90] Ф. Прокопович, *Богословское учение о состоянии неповрежденного человека*, p. 91; В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 139; F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, London 1723, p. 28. The phrase "wonderful air, healthy food, the fertility of earth" comes from a prayer said by a diakon during church service.

[91] В. М. Ничик, *Феофан Прокопович*, p. 115–116.

[92] *Ibidem*, p. 117.

[93] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 66.

ing Origen's claim.[94] This provides a twofold inducement for choosing salvation: the attraction of heavenly bliss and a fear of infernal perdition.

An inducement is the goodness and, most of all, beauty which lead us to the love of God. Faith and natural reason teach that God is infinite goodness and ineffable beauty.[95] The beauty of the world came from God, and if we admire this earthly beauty we should realize that the beauty of the divine realm is infinitely more dazzling.[96] There is a measure of equality in heaven. "The eternal life will be one and the same to all, only the glory will be different and unequal, greater or smaller in life, that is, in the eternal kingdom, which is one",[97] "different levels of glory and joy, differently measured by the virtue and works".[98] It is unclear in what consists the different levels of glory, but the level of joy apparently will be allotted in accordance to good works.

On the other hand, we should be afraid of the possibility of not being admitted to heaven. The saints and prophets were afraid of death; so much more should be ordinary sinners.[99] Incidentally, this fear is apparently not quite effective since people do continue to sin. However, Chrysostom was right in saying that although we know about punishment after death, the world is full treachery, thievery, etc.; what would the world be without knowledge of the punishment after death?[100]

The recipe for salvation is simple and yet so difficult: do not sin. It would be easy to avoid a sin if we kept in mind that God is everywhere present and sees everything,[101] that He stands next to us and sees even the smallest things and counts all infractions (Ps. 139.3).[102] However, since we are sinful, and only Christ's life was without blemish, we need to have a way of expunging our sin without procrastination. This is possible. Mistaken are Calvinist theologians who teach that in the corrupted human nature natural drives cannot be overcome.[103] Who delays repentance until death will never do it. Conscience can be cleansed by "the holy confession, heavy sighing, bitter tears," that is, by humility and contrition, whereby an entry can be obtained to the eternal heavenly kingdom.[104] We should remember that Christ – who is "true God

[94] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 232.

[95] *Ibidem*, p. 256.

[96] *Ibidem*, p. 257.

[97] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 67.

[98] *Ibidem*, p. 73. In this, Prokopovich followed John Chrysostom who had stated that "although all the saved will be in the Heavenly Kingdom, all will not receive the same reward, and although all sinners will be in hell, not all will endure the same punishment," (*Homily 41 on the First letter to Corinthians*).

[99] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 254.

[100] *Ibidem*, p. 268.

[101] *Ibidem*, p. 244.

[102] *Ibidem*, p. 246.

[103] *Ibidem*, p. 269.

[104] *Ibidem*, p. 256.

and one with Father and the Holy Spirit"[105] – suffered and died "for us, for our salvation, for the love of us",[106] thereby opening the door to salvation for everyone. People are justified through Christ "before the heavenly Father, that is, they receive forgiveness of sin and thus they will have peace with God in their conscience through faith in Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, who is the only one who can gain for us, sinners, access to and boldness toward God through His blood and death".[107] He is the only way and we are saved only through Christ.[108] This is all-sufficient since salvation cannot be earned by good works;[109] good works can only earn a better reward, but not the reward itself.[110]

Hell is described in almost Dantean terms by specifying different levels of punishment depending on the seriousness of sin: "punishment of sinners according to the measure of their impurity is not the same, but the eternal fire and eternal death is the same to them";[111] apparently, all sins are equally serious in that they result in eternal punishment but not equally serious in that they result in a gradation of punishment. There are also different types of suffering. The first type of suffering is infernal fire[112] used to torment the worst sinners, blasphemers, sacrilegers, heretics.[113] The second torment is the memory of good times on earth[114]. The third torment is the fact that it goes on eternally.[115]

How can God, who is love, sentence anyone for punishment that never ends, although the sinful life was of limited duration? That is what is required by the infinite purity of God since the seriousness of sin does not depend on its kind or magnitude, but on the kind and magnitude of the lawgiver, who is God. Therefore, "sin is mortal and serious also in the small, it is as big as God Himself who is harmed when a man is harmed" by someone's sin.[116] And God can take it: He endured the sight of His Son on the cross; He will also endure the complaints of those in hell. "He will even rejoice and mock at the perdition of the

[105] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 47.

[106] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 266.

[107] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 32–33; F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, p. 33, 36.

[108] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 49; Ф. Прокопович, *Листи*, in his *Філософські твори*, Київ 1979–1981, vol. 3, p. 259–263.

[109] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 72, 74.

[110] In Samarin's rendition, through his deeds, man "only gives to God what is due, like a slave to his master; besides, the deeds are always imperfect since, in this world, man cannot free himself from sin," Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 139.

[111] Ф. Прокопович, Разговор гражданина…, p. 66.

[112] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 232.

[113] *Ibidem*, p. 233.

[114] *Ibidem*, p. 234.

[115] *Ibidem*, p. 236; F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, p. 34, 36.

[116] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 42; Prokopowicz, *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*, vol. 2, 309; Ю. Ф. Самарин, *Стефан Яворский и Феофан Прокопович*, p. 108.

lost".[117] Also, it seems that, in Prokopovich's grim estimation, there will be a great deal of divine mocking since there are more lost than saved, as apparently indicated by the statement that many are called and few are chosen (Mt. 22:14).[118] How many and how few? Reason teaches us that the number of the lost will be far larger than the number of the saved.[119] Consider the flood, when only eight people were saved, and Sodom, when only three people escaped the destruction.[120] Also, from the original number of people who left Egypt, only Joshua and Caleb reached the promised land.[121] Moreover, Chrysostom assessed that from among some 100,000 inhabitants of Antioch only 100 would be saved.[122] "Only in the Orthodox church, like in a safe harbor that is secured all around," can people be safe from perdition, and yet, even there, since "not only deeds without faith but also faith without deeds (…) do not help in anything," many fall out as heretics or as hypocrites.[123] In fact, if Prokopovich's estimation is taken at face value, not even one percent of people would make it to heaven, and thus the churches are filled with people who, with only rare exceptions, are heading straight to hell. With such skewed odds, it would be interesting to see in which group Prokopovich would count himself. Probably caught up by the moment of preaching, he also stated that all people born in 5,000 years since the creation of the world until the birth of Christ were sent to hell.[124] On the other hand, he acknowledged that Enoch was spared that fate (seemingly because he was marked for a battle with the Antichrist[125]), and he would also very likely have considered Abraham, Moses, Joseph and a few other figures to be designated for salvation (would Moses and Elijah were let from hell to converse with Christ as witnessed by Peter?). Those, who did not and do not know the law of God have no excuse since the law is written on the tablets of their hearts,[126] i.e., people have conscience that in the absence of the written law should be their guide. Ignorance is just not an excuse,[127] since the law of God is obligatory to all people, including unbelievers.[128] On the other hand, as Prokopovich agreed, Christ is an offering not only for our sins, but also for sins

[117] *Ibidem*, p. 238.
[118] *Ibidem*, p. 285.
[119] *Ibidem*, p. 287.
[120] *Ibidem*, p. 288.
[121] *Ibidem*, p. 289.
[122] *Ibidem*, p. 296.
[123] *Ibidem*, p. 294. The Russian Orthodox Church is "the one and only Church in which there, is hope of eternal salvation and outside of which no one can be saved," Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, Санкт-Петербург 1760, vol. 3, p. 312; O.T. della Cava, *Sermons of Feofan Prokopovič: themes and style*, PhD diss., New York 1972, p. 28.
[124] T. Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, p. 291.
[125] *Ibidem*, p. 244.
[126] Ф. Прокопович, *Разговор гражданина…*, p. 30.
[127] *Ibidem*, p. 32.
[128] *Ibidem*, p. 40.

of the entire world (1 John 2:2);[129] could this offering be also claimed at least by those who never heard the Christian message of salvation?

6. The church and the state

Relatively early Prokopovich gave more and more attention in his speeches and writings to political matters. During Peter I's visit in Kiev in 1706, he gave a sermon which attracted the tsar's attention with his nontraditional – with little references to the antiquity – way of extolling the office of the tsar and then in 1709 after Peter's victory in Poltava. He was invited by the tsar in 1711 to the campaign against the Turks and eventually summoned to Saint Petersburg. Soon after his arrival to Petersburg in 1717, he set about to write a relatively slim work which became his most widely known legacy, *The spiritual regulation*. The *Regulation*, published in 1721, set out a new administrative order for the clergy along with rules and plans for the clergy. It established the office of the Spiritual College to oversee the spiritual matters according to the models of the Lutheran synods of the West, "a spiritual conciliar administration" to "govern all spiritual activities within the All-Russian Church".[130] The highest office of the patriarch, which has been vacant since 1700 after the death of the patriarch Adrian, was effectively abolished (the office of the patriarch was restored briefly in 1917 and then in 1943). The name of the College was changed after just one meeting to the Most Holy Ruling Synod, and its members, just as all the clergy, had to take an oath of loyalty to the tsar. Prokopovich became in 1721 a vice-president of the Synod frequently becoming a dominant voice in its proceedings. Prokopovich's role in all this was to provide a theological justification for the expansion of power of the tsar, which reduced the role of the church to an organ of the state.

Prokopovich, an author of a textbook on rhetoric, was usually very careful in phrasing in theological terms the claims of the tsar. The main problem was that the church was an important institution and Orthodox faith was very important to Russians. Although Peter I not infrequently enforced his reforms without any regard to the popular opinion and manifested disdain to the church, Prokopovich proceeded more cunningly by trying to fit the new political order within the traditional faith using Biblical arguments, statements made by the church fathers, but also, in the spirit of the time, referring to the natural law.[131]

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[129] *Ibidem*, p. 45, 51.

[130] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.6; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 3.

[131] F. Prokopovich, *Peter the Great: his law on the imperial succession, the official commentary: Pravda voli monarshei*, Oxford 1996 (1722), p. 135.139.163; Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, in his *Сочинения*, Москва 1961, p. 82; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor* (1718), in: *Russian intellectual history: an anthology*, ed. M. Raeff, New York 1966, p. 19–20.

In his *Primer for youth*, a widely used[132] catechism for providing basic religious education for children,[133] but also for instilling the virtue of obedience to the tsar, Prokopovich included the following statement in his explanation of the Creed: "I believe in one, holy, conciliar and apostolic church, I place my entire trust on its head, the one Christ: I confess the church that is the community of orthodox Christians who have dogmas and teachings as handed down to us by apostles and as illuminated by the ecumenical councils of pastors, I confess that there is in the holy church the spiritual leadership, the pastoral office of bishops and presbyters, who took upon themselves the power and obligation to bind and loose sins in the name of the Lord, to give sacraments, and to teach people the way of salvation".[134] In this definition, only Christ is named the head of the church, not a pope, not a patriarch, not a tsar. In the *Regulation*, the tsar is called the highest judge of bishops and their guardian: "the final judge of the Spiritual College"[135] and a "guardian of the true faith and of all good order in the Holy Church".[136] Only Christ is the tsar of the church.[137] If this is not enough, the tsar is also called a bishop.

Since "bishop," i.e., "*episcopus*" means overseer or supervisor, the Christian rulers "can call themselves not only bishops, but also bishops of bishops" because "the ruler, the highest authority, is a perfect, ultimate, highest, truest overseer, that is, the one having the power of ruling, of ultimate judgment, and of punishing over all the ranks and authorities subject to him, both secular and spiritual (…) and since his sovereign overseeing is established by God also over the spiritual rank, thus each highest lawful ruler in the realm of his rule is truly a bishop of bishops".[138] How seriously can this argument be taken? Bishops and presbyters are priests;[139] would thus each ruler become a priest? Prokopovich would not go that far. He explained that the tsar is a ruler over merchants, himself not being a merchant, so he is a ruler over bishops, not performing the duties of a bishop.[140] However, Prokopovich did not call the tsar a merchant of merchants, so his explanation is duplicitous. He did want to create more and more of an aura of sacredness around the tsar and had no theological qualms in ascribing to a tsar the title of a bishop.

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[132] П. В. Верховской, *Учреждение Духовной коллегии и Духовный регламент*, vol. 1, p. 393.

[133] F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, p. 1–37.

[134] *Ibidem*, p. 35; H. J. Härtel, *Byzantinisches Erbe und Orthodoxie bei Feofan Prokopovič*, Würzburg 1970, p. 99.

[135] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.11; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 6.

[136] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.28; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 8.

[137] Ф. Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, vol. 3, 335; H. J. Härtel, *Byzantinisches Erbe…*, p. 100.

[138] Ф. Прокопович, *Розыск исторический* (1721), in: П. В. Верховской, *Учреждение Духовной коллегии и Духовный регламент*, vol. 2, p. 3.13; П. Морозов, *Феофан Прокопович как писатель*, p. 256; Ф. Прокопович, Слово на похвалу блаженныя и вечнодостойныя памяти Петра Великаго, in his *Сочинения*, p. 138.

[139] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.66; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 47.

[140] Ф. Прокопович, *Розыск исторический*, p. 3.13–14.

The fact that ecclesiastical reform is performed follows Biblical examples.[141] Each member of the Synod should swear "to be faithful, good, and obedient slave (раб) and subject to the natural and true Tsar and Sovereign". "As for whatever concerns damage, harm, or loss to His Majesty's interests," each member should swear to "strive by all possible means to avert it and not to tolerate it".[142] By having the collegial clerical body instead of one patriarch, a possibility of making errors is reduced. Incidentally, when arguing why conciliar administration is better than having a patriarch, Prokopovich mentioned the tsar and his advisors,[143] but clearly, the position of these advisors vs. the tsar is incomparable to the positions of members of the College. The tsar remains autocratic; there is not autocracy in the College. The president of the College is subject to the judgment of his peers, which would not be the case when "a single despotic pastor governs",[144] but Prokopovich did not have any concern about the possibility of the rule by a single despotic tsar.

Among the many rules for the clergy, the *Regulation* lists four major topics that should be covered by preachers: repentance, regeneration of life, "respect for the authorities, especially the supreme authority of the Tsar," and obligations of every class.[145] Also, when some infractions of authorities are known to preachers, they should not be mentioned in front of the congregation, and, in fact, preachers should refrain from any open criticism of authorities.[146] Preachers have to enforce obedience to the tsar through their preaching but never openly point to his erroneous decisions or questionable actions.

Defying the Orthodox faith must not be tolerated. Schismatics can be recognized by not taking communion at least once a year.[147] They should be reported to the authorities and should not hold any spiritual or civil position, since they could continue to perpetrate an evil of dissension to the detriment of the tsar.[148]

Any prospective priest has to take an oath of loyalty to the tsar, most controversially, to reveal any rebellious intentions revealed during confession.[149] The requirement is hedged in the condition that such a confession was not followed by repentance and was made with an intent to gain the priest's assent to a nefarious deed.[150] Prokopovich seems to have purposely confused the issue. If some rebellious plan is revealed to a priest with no intention of repentance and with an intention of winning the priest over to a wicked plan, this is more

[141] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.6; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 3.
[142] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.11; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 6.
[143] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.29; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 9.
[144] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.32; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 12.
[145] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.63; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 43.
[146] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.63; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 44.
[147] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.67; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 48.
[148] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.69; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 49.
[149] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.84; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 59.
[150] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.85–86; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 60.

of a conversation than a confession, or rather, it is a confession in a broad sense when one person is saying something surreptitiously to another. Prokopovich seems to have required here[151] that a rebellious plan revealed to a priest in *any* situation should be reported, even during a genuine confession. Who is to know that a repentance is genuine, not faked for the sake of avoiding being reported? And what would happen to a priest who would not report a rebellious plan, and the plan was carried out? Would the priest's inaction be lightly forgiven if he said that he thought the perpetrator's repentance had been genuine? At best, the priest would ponder this problem in Siberia.

Why should the clergy and, in fact, anyone, be obedient to the tsar? Since this is a Christian not merely civil, but also a religious obligation. "The basis of government is the law of God, (…) ecumenical councils, and civil statutes which agree with the word of God".[152] Also, as argued in the 1718 "Sermon on power and honor of the tsar," the power of a ruler comes from God, and any disobedience to the ruler is a sin against God and should be punished now and will also be punished after death.[153] There are explicit statements in the Bible that urge obedience to authority, in particular Romans 13. However, there are other passages with which an indiscriminate obedience should be balanced. Prokopovich explained away one of them that states that what is highly esteemed among people is an abomination in the sight of God (Luke 16:15) by stating that it refers to pride.[154]

Obedience is due not only to good powers but also to the perverse and faithless, in which Prokopovich referred to apostle Peter's urging that slaves should be obedient to good and to bad lords (1 P. 2:18).[155] True, the apostle referred to slaves only, not to citizens, but the oath of the Synod members explicitly required them to swear allegiance as slaves. Thereby, Prokopovich gave a free reign to the tsar who could do pretty much anything and yet citizens should obey him for the fear of eternal punishment. Prokopovich did not quote the apostle Peter's statement made in front of the Sanhedrin that one should listen to God rather than to man, any man (Acts 5:29). In Prokopovich political theology, if a ruler goes rogue, the ruler should not be blamed, but rather his subjects, since a tyranny is not merely allowed by God, but it is sent as a punishment for sins of the people.[156] Therefore, they should endure such an ordeal not only without criticism, but even "without secret grumbling, and even without

[151] Admittedly, this was done at a specific urging of Peter I, Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.84 note 9; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 115 note 106.

[152] Ф. Прокопович, *Духовный регламент*, p. 1.27; F. Prokopovich, *The Spiritual Regulation…*, p. 7.

[153] Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, p. 77–78; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor*, p. 16.

[154] Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, p. 80–81; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor*, p. 18–19.

[155] Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, p. 86; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor*, p. 23.

[156] Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, vol. 2, p. 182; H.J. Härtel, *Byzantinisches Erbe…*, p. 84–85.

mental reservations,"[157] with patience, "without complaint as a cross".[158] However, by definition, the tsar is a true believer and true judging master, and thus he is like a father to all, and thereby should be honored like a father, as prescribed in the decalogue[159] and even a young tsar is a father to old subjects.[160] No exception should be made for the clergy, since they are but another rank in the nation, not a different government.[161] The tsar is crowned by God,[162] he is responsible only before God, but not before his subjects and not to any human jurisdiction.[163] Therefore, the subjects can only beseech God to change the ruler's heart.[164]

Prokopovich was the first in Russian literature to have spoken about the priority of secular power.[165] The argument was largely theological sophistry, but it did not matter much to the tsar, and his legal primacy over the church became a reality. Prokopovich, in spite of opposition of his clerical peers and even in spite of a hint of heresy, was appointed bishop of Pskov in 1718 and in 1724 archbishop of Novgorod. To the end of his life (1736), also after the death of Peter I in 1725, Prokopovich defended his claims made in the *Regulation* and stayed in spiritual power with three more tsarist sovereigns. Prokopovich – a talented theologian and philosopher, turned into a defender of autocracy, providing theological justification of tyranny and enslavement not only of the church, but also of the entire nation.[166]

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[157] P 197, 213; F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, p. 10; Ф. Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, vol. 3, 152; O. T. della Cava, *Sermons of Feofan Prokopovič*, p. 69.

[158] F. Prokopovich, *Peter the Great…*, p. 219.

[159] Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, p. 87; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor*, p. 25.

[160] F. Prokopovich, *The Russian catechism*, p. 13.

[161] Ф. Прокопович, *Слово о власти и чести царской*, p. 88; F. Prokopovich, *Sermon on royal authority and honor*, p. 25; Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, vol. 3, p. 151; O. T. della Cava, *Sermons of Feofan Prokopovič*, p. 71.

[162] Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, vol. 1, p. 150; vol. 2, p. 1, 48, 109; vol. 3, p. 187; H.J. Härtel, *Byzantinisches Erbe…*, p. 85.

[163] F. Prokopovich, *Peter the Great…*, p. 187–197.

[164] "The tsar is above the law. No one in the world can call him to account. His person is inviolable and immune," H. J. Härtel, *Byzantinisches Erbe…*, p. 91.

[165] П. Морозов, *Феофан Прокопович как писатель*, p. 199.

[166] "From an ideologist of Christianity using power as its instrument, Prokopovič is transformed into an ideologist of state power using Christianity as its instrument," J. Šerech, *On Teofan Prokopovič as writer and preacher in his Kiev period*, „Harvard Slavic Studies" 1954, p. 223.

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Feofan Prokopowicz: od teologii do polityki

Streszczenie

Prokopowicz rozpoczął swą działalność w kościele prawosławnym jako wykładowca w Akademii Kijowskiej, gdzie wykładał na różne tematy i pozostawił sporą ilość notatek, które zostały pośmiertnie opublikowane w wielotomowej pracy *Christianae orthodoxae theologiae*. Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje niektóre filozoficzne i teologiczne poglądy Prokopowicza, a mianowicie: jego obronę autorytetu Biblii i konieczności jej dosłownej interpretacji, charakteryzację w pozytywnych terminach atrybutów boskich, opis stworzenia i struktura świata, opis sytuacji człowieka w świecie oraz problem eschatologii. Gdy Prokopowicz został wezwany do Petersburga przez Piotra I, stopniowo poniechał badań teologicznych i filozoficznych koncentrując się na kwestiach politycznych, a w szczególności na uzasadnieniu władzy carskiej i na konieczności podporządkowania kościoła władzy państwa. Owocem tego był *Regulamin duchowy*, który oznaczał koniec niezależności Kościoła w Rosji.

Słowa kluczowe: Piotr I, Prokopowicz, stosunek państwa do Kościoła; teologia prawosławna.