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## SERMONS OF GAVRIIL BUZHINSKII

Buzhinskii was born around 1680 in the Ukraine. He received a good education in the Kiev Academy. In 1707, he became a monk and assumed the name of Gavriil. In 1714, he became a prefect of the Academy. In 1718, Peter I appointed him as principal priest of the Russian navy. In 1721, he became an archimandrite of a monastery in Kostroma and a member of the Synod. From 1722 he was in charge of schools overseen by the Synod and of the synodal printing press. In 1726, he became a bishop of Riazan and Murom. In 1729, because of his denunciation, he took up residence in Moscow where he died in 1731<sup>1</sup>.

Buzhinskii's membership in the Synod indicates his high position in the church hierarchy. He was well-educated which is reflected in his four book translations from Latin<sup>2</sup> and numerous references to ancient history and classical

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<sup>1</sup> Г[ерард] Ф. М[иллер], [Предисловие], in: Гавриил Бужинский, *Собрание некоторых проповедей*, Москва: Сенатская типография 1768, unnumbered; the same preface in: Гавриил Бужинский, *Полное собрание поучительных слов*, Москва: Университетская типография у Н. Новикова [1784], pp. i-v; Archbishop Simon [Novikov], His Grace Bishop Gavriil of Riazan and Murom, *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* 1984, no 2, pp. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> Эрасм [Роттердамский], *Разговоры дружеския*, Санкт-Петербург 1716; Самуил Пуфендорф, *Введение в историю Европейскую*, Санкт-Петербург 1718; Самуил Пуфендорф, *О должности человека и гражданина по закону естественному*, Санкт-Петербург 1724; Вилгелм Стратеман, *Феатрон, или Позор исторический*, Санкт-Петербург: Типография Александрo-Невского монастыря 1724.

literature in his sermons. It appears that his sermons – over 40 of them are preserved – are the only original work Buzhinskii left behind, many of them preached before Peter I and the imperial family. In these sermons, Buzhinskii devoted as much attention to the role of religion in personal life as to the nationalistic message presented in the religious context aimed primarily at the glorification of tsar Peter I.

### Personal salvation

According to Buzhinskii, through the disobedience and the idle curiosity of the first parents, sin entered the world and because of that the world is perishing (46, 649).<sup>3</sup> All people are born in sin and because of it, they are barred from entering the kingdom of God. However, God Himself prepared the solution by offering Himself through Christ on the cross to be punished for the sins of humanity. God creates opportunities for man to turn to Him; He calls man to conversion and gives His grace to someone who repents (17). Like a physician, God heals a person and gives rules for a healthy life (18). When a person violates these rules and becomes ill again, God abandons him (19). Such people come under the rule of the devil (20). They become more foolish than animals: when animals are hurt in some place, they do not return to it. Humans, when they free themselves from the fangs of the devil, give themselves to it again (22). When God withdraws His blessings from them, not only do they not repent, but they even brag about their sins and their sin becomes a habit (24). They will be punished not only for their own sins but also for the sins of others, of those whom they led astray, cf. Mt. 18:6 (26). Worst of all, they will be punished like Judas for crucifying Christ, cf. 1 Cor. 8:12 (27).

Everyone got a key to heaven, not the same as apostle Peter and other apostles, but a key to be always carried since the time of death is unknown; the key

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<sup>3</sup> References are made to Гавриил Бужинский, *Проповеди*, Юрьев: Типография К. Маттисена 1901.

opens the gate of eternity. In fact, the church gives two keys: the first key is one's repentance; the second is the eucharist (613). No one can enter the kingdom of heaven without baptism, but baptism without repentance as its basis is invalid (614). Repentance consists in bringing by faith the weakened soul to Christ as to the heavenly physician. Fathers of the church spoke about repentance in two senses. First, repentance is a virtue that includes other virtues: withdrawing from sins, prayer for the forgiveness of sins, staying away from evil, doing good, and fasting. Second, repentance is one of the seven mysteries/sacraments established by Christ Himself when a person confesses sins before the omniscient God and receives forgiveness from a priest. The second meaning is part of the first (619-620). There is in man natural love of oneself and also among animals (633), but whoever delays his repentance does not love himself since only the one loves himself who wants good things for himself (634). The body is dead without the soul; the soul is dead without Christ.<sup>4</sup> One should come to the church to confess his sins with a repenting heart before the priest; such repentance is a key that opens heaven (636).

Conversion should not remain a one-time event, but a life-long commitment of life according to the will of God. This should be a life of good works and life of prayer since "prayer always unites us with and binds to God" (56); prayer protects us in all troubles (57). This aspect of life should not be considered lightly.

Using a sermon copied from Iavorskii, Buzhinskii advocated the prayer of the Canaan woman as a model for all Christians.<sup>5</sup> 1. First, we should purify our

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<sup>4</sup> Cf., corpus mortuum esse sine anima: animam mortuam esse sine Deo, Augustine, *Sermo* 65.6.7.

<sup>5</sup> Most of sermon 16 (243-256) is a carbon copy of a sermon by Стефан Яворский, *Проповеди*, Москва: Синодальная типография 1804-1805, vol. 2, pp. 49-76, in which Iavorskii repeated some things he already had said in another sermon, vol. 1, pp. 221-237, Buzhinskii only added a two-page ending. It is quite ironic that in the preface to his translation of Wilhelm Stratemann's *Theatrum historicum* he alluded to Russian authors who modify works of other authors and publish them as their own, which can, in his view, be noticed in such luminaries as Iavorskii. This is a sin against the eighth and tenth commandment, remarked Buzhinskii, П[етр П.] Пекарский, *Наука и литература в России при Петре Великом*, Санкт-Петербург: издание Товарищества "Общественная польза" 1862, vol. 1, p. 330.

conscience from sin (246). 2. We should ask God for mercy (248). 3. Prayer should be made with faith (249). 4. We should use our reason like this woman who went with her prayer directly to Christ (250): we should pray with reason paying attention to the prayer, pray with contrition. Long prayer with the wandering mind is useless. 5. We should pray with wisdom, by seeing Christ as God-man (252). 6. Prayer should flow from the heart (252); 7 it should be done with humility (253) and 8. with patience. 9. Few people know how to pray (254). 10. Prayers are not answered when requests are made for the wrong reasons. An answer to prayer can be delayed 1. “so that we don’t elevate ourselves to the heights because of that, so that we don’t become presumptuous, so that we don’t ascribe to ourselves false and hypocritical sanctity, so that we always recognize our misery and curse”; people too quickly forget that blessings they enjoy come from God and take them for granted (255). 2. An answer to prayer is also delayed “so that we recognize the greatness of his [God’s] gift and appreciate them and be greatly grateful” (256). 3. “Frequently we ask for things that seem to us beneficial, but they are harmful and displeasing to God” (257). 4. An answer to prayer is delayed “to test our faith and patience” and also our trust in love for Him (257). 5. Moreover, “the most merciful God our Father wants to converse more with us, his children” (258).

It is an inborn desire to possess knowledge. However, people go to the furthest lands to extend their knowledge, but they do not know themselves. “Many people know many things, but they do not understand that there is only one wisdom and true philosophy – to know one’s own station in life, to know oneself” (470). “Knowing oneself, analyzing oneself diligently – this is the only true knowledge and the highest point of all great wisdom. This is not only great wisdom but also the source of happiness since by this path alone and by this ladder we can ascend to this desirable and highest good, to God our Creator; the one ascends to the divine mountain who first enters into himself. ... You should first understand your invisible spirit and then you’ll be able to know visible [things] of God. This is the best mirror to see God – the mind that always looks into itself. It is impossible [for you] to see into the riches and depth of wisdom of God before you do not know your sin, your nakedness, your spiritual

poverty and the ultimate damnation itself" (471). Importantly, physico-theologians would say that the knowledge of nature, its orderliness and harmony is the best way leading to the knowledge of God. However, physico-theology is virtually absent in Buzhinskii's sermons; only a brief remark was made that unlike the mystery of the Trinity, which can only be accepted by faith, the existence of God can be known by reason as indicated by Paul in Rom. 1:19-20 (517). Only later in the eighteenth century did physico-theology acquire a prominent place in the religious reflection of Russian ecclesiastics and lay thinkers.

God uses a variety of means to bring people to Himself, punishment for sins being one such means since it makes people realize that God is displeased with their actions. According to Buzhinskii, God punishes us for our sins with "unhealthy air, by taking away from us good crops, by making the sky like copper and the earth like iron ... He smites us with a plague, hunger, war to scare us with all of it to turn us away from our lawlessness, to turn us to penance to know his mercy." He punishes people with illness and bodily afflictions; He uses to that end ferocious animals and snakes (77). God sometimes sends afflictions to those He loves to give them greater reward, to make their virtue shine even more, to show His power, but mostly He sends afflictions to people for their sins to scare and punish them and set them on the right path. In Buzhinskii's assessment, who is ill of chiragra, whose hand dries, is punished for not stretching this hand with mercy to others; podagra is a punishment for laziness, severe fever for lust of possession (126-128).

A Christian should follow Christ. For Buzhinskii following Christ did not mean to become a monk, but to remain pure and without shame in one's calling and the station of life whether a person is free or slave, poor or rich, soldier or farmer, merchant or artist (193) since God created one person to be a leader or ruler, another to be a servant or a slave and all to love one another (4). At the same time, Buzhinskii urged his listeners that they should follow the example of apostle Peter who was obedient in following the call of Christ (192-193). However, Peter was called not to remain in his station of life, i.e., to remain a fisherman, but to abandon his profession. Such inconsistency can be better seen in Buzhinskii's pronouncement that everyone should know his rank and should

remain in it (477); he said this in the very sermon in which he praised Catherine I, a peasant woman whom Peter elevated to the position of the tsarina; according to Buzhinskii's principles, this should be an alarming fact since she clearly abandoned her rank.

The life on earth should be led with the goal of reaching the heavenly gates after death. Remember the time of death – this is a foundation of non-Christian and Christian philosophy. For pagan philosophers this was the only way to induce people to correct their ways; for Christians, thinking about death should bring to their minds the crucified Christ and salvation prepared by Him. In this way, the thought about death will not terrify anyone (314). Shouldn't it? In Buzhinskii's evaluation, the prospects are rather bleak. Many are called, few are chosen (Mt. 22:14) – in this verse the word "few" is like a trumpet that should wake up the world. It urged many people to abandon the world and live in the desert (293, 312); it drove countless people to their death as martyrs. From the flood only Noah's family was saved (294), eight people and even from among them one person, Ham, did not escape eternal suffering. The flood did not destroy the root of evil since when humanity multiplied itself, lawlessness abounded. In Sodom, there was impossible to find ten righteous people to save the city (295). From among men who followed Moses from Egypt, only two of them reached the promised land. Now, only few of those who are baptized will reach the kingdom of heaven (296). Jericho is an image of the world from which only one household was saved. Gideon chose only 300 people for a battle from among thousands. David was abandoned by many enlisted by Absalom and later by mutinous Sheba (297). Prophets spoke about evil in the entire world and very little truth and goodness (299). Christ chose twelve apostles and even among them one was a traitor (302). St. Nilus said that only one person in 10,000 will be saved. Chrysostom said that only 100 people in Constantinople will be saved and even this is not certain. Buzhinskii endorsed this assessment (303). Even some saints feared death. Apostle John saw many books, but only one book of life (304, 312). Taken by its face value, because even the saints trembled before death, an average believer has virtually no chance to be saved: just one in 100,000. What a truly apocalyptic hopelessness Buzhinskii painted

for his flock. In this, he apparently followed Prokopovich, who was equally pessimistic about the prospect of salvation: he used the same examples (the flood, Sodom, the exodus, Jericho, Gideon) and agreed with Chrysostom's assessment.<sup>6</sup>

### Panegyrics

Patriotic elements are at least as important in Buzhinskii's sermons as there are issues of personal salvation and religious life. Patriotism is expressed primarily by praises given to Peter by extolling his accomplishments and personal traits and by praises of Russia, all of it in a religious context.

Russian monarchy is protected by God. God gave Peter to his mother (97) as an expression of the fact that the Russian crown is directed, loved, and protected by God (560).

Peter, the Russian eagle, is an imitator of Christ, the heavenly eagle; he attends church, sings hymns, prays and is merciful (67). All foreigners living in Russia praise his mercifulness and generosity. He, like the sun, shines on all people with his mercifulness and generosity showing to all his love. He mortifies his body living not for himself, but for Russia (68). He is just. He was born in a poor country disdained by others (69) and made it blossom. His is "unsurpassable wisdom of ruling" (70). His military victories were aligned with the will of God. Victory in Leszno in 1708 was a result of prayer (258). The Poltava victory was given to Russia by Christ. Wise and benevolent tsar Peter was protected by God who left a trace of it in his hat that was grazed by a bullet during the battle. "The Lord was above the head of his Christ at the time of this fierce battle" (335). Peter just did not care about his own health nor about himself but only about the common good and peace (87).

Peter's military invasions were apparently also pleasing to God since Buzhinskii, a priest, praised Peter for "expansion of borders of the empire" (96).

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<sup>6</sup> Theophan[es] Prokopowicz, *Miscellanea sacra*, Wratislavia: Iohannes Korn 1744, pp. 288-297.

All victories and territorial gains of Russia show “who fights according to the heart of God” (229). Peter took them back and like in the case of Job who was rewarded with multiplying his possessions, God rewarded Russia by allowing it to take new territories, which is the sign of God’s love and providence (465). “In this love Peter is a true imitator of Christ the Lord: not sparing his most precious soul for his fatherland, for friends in the Christian faith, and by his scepter given by God for his subjects. Not sparing his life in works and efforts, in frost and in labor, in travels and sea expeditions...”; this love was obvious in the expedition against the Ottoman enemy of Christianity (591). And so, any aggression can be justified by the desire to spread Christianity or at least by the eradication of non-Christian faiths.

Buzhinskii was not troubled by stating on the one hand that Christ brought the greatest gift: peace (601, 605), peace that is the source from which all happiness flows (605), while on the other justifying Peter’s campaigns and the rule which was marked by almost constant wars. For Buzhinskii, battles of Christians do not contradict the principle of loving the enemy (Mt. 5:44), but are in agreement with it since such battles turn enemies away from violence and call them to peace and thus to love and friendship. Speaking about living enemies Jesus apparently spoke about private enemies, not about the enemies of society and the state (341). In the Old Testament, God commanded to love enemies,<sup>7</sup> but He also commanded the Israelites to wage wars and helped to win them. The former refers to private enemies, the latter to the enemies of the entire society (342).<sup>8</sup> A battle is lawful when lawful authority calls for it when there is a rebellion, a legitimate reason, and when there is a need for defense. These reasons can be found in the Scriptures (346). And so, it boils down to the lawful authority and legitimate reasons, and Buzhinskii never questioned legitimacy of any bellicose endeavor of Peter, a divinely appointed monarch. Appa-

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<sup>7</sup> This command is Buzhinskii’s interpretation of the command concerning not hating one’s brother and not avenging oneself (Lev. 19:17-18).

<sup>8</sup> “In this way, following Prokopovich and other supporters of Peter I, he was developing the idea of civic attitude and its priority over private, particular interests of people,” Лев А. Петров, *Общественно-политические взгляды Прокоповича, Татищевой и Кантемира*, Иркутск: Иркутское книжное издательство 1959, p. 12.



rently, Buzhinskii's role in it was to provide a Biblical justification, regardless of how tenuous it would be, for any enterprise of Peter without giving even a hint of displeasure.

Incongruously, Buzhinskii stated that being God's people, heaven is our fatherland (539), "our" referring to the Russians, the new Israel (540), and having our fatherland in heaven it is a blindness to limit ourselves to the earth (544). And yet, this blindness prevails when it comes to the Russian affairs, since he also said that people have obligations toward the fatherland, the Russian fatherland, that is, since they owe everything to it (439). Pagans and Christians are obligated to protect their fatherland since they are not born for themselves (442) but for the fatherland. The father of the fatherland was given to Russia by God and thus all Russians should give their lives for Peter's honor (443). Apostle Peter's request that Jesus allows him to walk on water (Mt. 4:28) Buzhinskii turned into a nationalistic statement that God gave Russia a ruler who walks on water because he created a fleet with which he defeated Sweden (446).

Being an imitator of Christ, expectedly, Peter helps the church (67) and cares for the church and Orthodox faith. Thanks to him life is quiet and peaceful and so is the life of the church (71).<sup>9</sup> He has the virtues of apostles Peter and Paul since he spreads and protects the faith (208). In all this, Buzhinskii never mentioned the fact that Peter subjugated the church to the state by, among other things, replacing the patriarchate with the Synod. No small factor in this silence was the fact that Buzhinskii was a member of the Synod and thus part of enforcing Peter's policies if only through ecclesiastical means by making the church quiet and peaceful. In fact, he was proud of it when with a hint of self-reference he praised Peter's "choosing judicious men" to establish new laws and modify old ones.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "For Ecclesiastical peace and quietness he [Peter] established the Holy Ruling Synod," Гавриил [Бужинский], [Предисловие], in: Самуил Пуфендорф, *О должности человека и гражданина по закону естественному*, Санкт-Петербург 1726, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 6; one of Buzhinskii's tasks was to represent the Synod "on the commission on bringing into agreement the Russian Code with the laws of Sweden and Eastland," Archbishop Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Facts never got in the way of praises. A good tree cannot bring bad fruit, said Buzhinskii (79). “Father’s virtues are reflected in his son and God glorifies parent in their sons,” cf. Sirach 3:2 (80). “Son is eternal image of his father, he is his mirror, in him father sees himself” (90). “Sons are a joy for fathers in life, they are honor and glory after death” (99). This was said on the occasion of the birth of prince Peter. Buzhinskii did not mention Peter’s son Alexei, who was tsar Peter’s great disappointment and who soon was imprisoned and died in prison. Hardly Peter and thus Buzhinskii would consider Alexei a good fruit in whom the parent is glorified.

Buzhinskii said that God’s providence was constantly present with Russia since the Russian apostle, the prince Vladimir (450). This providence does everything in the best interest of humanity (456). On the other hand, to elevate the status of Peter in the Russian history, Buzhinskii also said that “Russia began to weaken from the moment of its birth,” starting from the time of Rurik when a foreign ruler was called to deal with internal conflicts (575). Conflicts did not stop afterwards and idolatry made them even worse. The baptism of Vladimir brought some peace, but after his death and division of the country they returned; then, Tatars overran Russia. The weakness of Russia ended with Peter (576). And so, the history of Russia was presented as a prelude to Peter’s rule who made it a strong empire and thereby fulfilled divine promises.

There is simply nothing that Peter could do wrong. His crowning achievement is St. Petersburg which Buzhinskii praised as the most glorious city in the world, most beautiful, built with supreme wisdom, beautifully situated, etc. “Without blushing,” as archbishop Filaret remarked, Buzhinskii said that “by its placement and beauty, the place [Petersburg] surpasses not only all Russia, but also in other European countries nothing not only the same, but not even similar can be found.”<sup>11</sup> There were, however, some critics, “venomous vipers sharpening their hellish teeth ... and denigrating this city daring to undermine the budding palm of [its] glory” (30), objecting the position of St. Pe-

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<sup>11</sup> Гавриил Бужинский, В похвалу Санктпетербурга, in his: *Полное собран ие поучительных слов*, р. 15; Филарет (Гумилевский), *Обзор русской духовной литературы*, Санкт-Петербург: И.Л. Тузов, 1884 [1859], р. 286.

tersburg on the borderline of the empire and thus very far from most parts of the country; they also criticized the high mortality rate of workers and inhuman conditions in building the city, which Buzhinskii dismissed with a rhetorical question: “what beginning isn’t difficult, what first path is not hard? ... all cities at the beginning experienced hardships” (31). As to its great level of mortality, he said that everyone is going to die some time: “when most merciful God in his unfathomable council determines death to someone, he will never be able to escape it”; some people avoid death in captivity, in sea storms, in fire (32); some people die in the mist of comfort and luxury; the critics should not be concerned about this but about their own sins (33).<sup>12</sup> Therefore, those who perished when toiling for Peter’s city, perished because their death had already been appointed by God. And so, just as in any other endeavor, so in building the new capital of Russia, God has been enlisted as a helper of Peter. After all, God Himself put him on the throne and all that did elevate Peter to the divine status. For this reason, Buzhinskii called Peter Christ – thereby following the lead of Iavorskii and Prokopovich<sup>13</sup> – and saw him like he saw Christ: upon Peter’s return from his European journey, the Orthodox church is also present “and with mental mouth it cries out: hosanna, blessed is the coming Russian tsar of the Christian Israel [Mt. 21:9],”<sup>14</sup> thereby using the imagery of Christ’s entering Jerusalem.

### Rhetoric

In his sermons, Buzhinskii presented himself not only as a pastor concerned about religious life and afterlife of his flock, but also as a rhetorician. He generously used Biblical references frequently quoting Biblical verses and referring to events and personages described in the Bible. Often it looks like an

<sup>12</sup> Бужинский, В похвалу Санктпетербурга, pp. 30-34.

<sup>13</sup> Яворский, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 179, vol. 3, pp. 253, 256-257; Феофан Прокопович, *Слова и речи*, Санкт-Петербург: При Сухопутном Шляхетном Кадетском Корпусе 1760-1774, vol. 1, p. 268, cf. vol. 2, p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> Гавриил [Бужинский], Preface to Самуил Пуфендорф, *Введение в историю Европейскую*, Санкт-Петербург 1718, p. 3.

effect of using biblical concordances to find proper references, which was a practice derided by Prokopovich.<sup>15</sup> For instance, most of sermon 21 is a collection of verses and references concerning the meaning of gratitude and sermon 37 is a similar collection of verses on the meaning of death. However, fairly often he also quoted classical authors and referred to ancient mythology to the extent that it apparently was for him natural to refer in the same sentence to Neptune and to the Tri-hypostatic God (444).

Buzhinskii liked and often used metaphors, even if they were not his own. Rabbis once said that God has four keys: the key to his treasure with which He feeds His creation (357); the key of His care with which He maintains the universe; the key of human birth with which He opens and closes the womb; the key of resurrection with which He opens the grave.<sup>16</sup> However, the key given to the church is the Word of God that opens the door to the kingdom of God (358). After the fall, the joys of heaven were closed for us for 5000 years (359). The key of the Scriptures God gave to the chosen house of David, to the Russian crown. God's love also is expressed in giving the key-bearer, tsar Peter I, who wisely used it since in him truly the prophetic words are fulfilled: "he opens and it won't be closed, he closed and it won't be opened" (368). God said to Peter: "you'll open the unjust lock, you'll lead captive from hell; you are Peter and I'll give you keys of the Kingdom: you'll open and no one will close, you'll close and no one will open. There will come the desirable time of salvation, there will come Russian regiments – not to take someone else's [property], but to free what was taken," namely the fortress (369). The fortress was opened with Peter's key and in turn became a key to open other fortresses and territories. May he open with the key of the Word of God after many victories to all Russians the gate of heavenly kingdom (370-371).

<sup>15</sup> Петр Морозов, *Феофан Прокопович как писатель*, Санкт Петербург: Балашев 1880, pp. 74, 108.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Harry Sysling, *Tebiyat Ha-Metim: the resurrection of the dead in the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and parallel traditions in classical Rabbinic literature*, Tübingen: Mohr 1996, ch. 6: The four keys. Buzhinskii spoke about the four keys in sermon 14 (213-215); this sermon (210-232) is a carbon copy of a sermon given by Яворский, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 259-294.

These are remarkable and, at the same time, befuddled statements made by a leading ecclesiastic. He effectively said that the Scriptures as a key to heaven were given to Russia or rather to tsar Peter I and the world since the fall had to wait in darkness and ignorance for this auspicious moment. Hardly can jingoism reach greater heights. Also, caught by metaphors, part of the enlightenment of the world Buzhinskii saw in the fact that the fortress of Schlüsselburg (Schlüssel = the key) was taken by Peter, which for Buzhinskii was another way of saying that God opened the Schlüsselburg fortress (561).

This multitudinous rendering of what key can mean was not an isolated rhetorical device Buzhinskii used. He could not stop in listing what the cross can mean, at least for St. Andrew: for St. Andrew, the cross was light, not heavy (107); 2. it was the sign of honor, not of shame (108, 131); 3. it was desirable, not horrible (108); 4. it brought joy (109); 5. it was a bridge to heaven (110); 6. a royal scepter (111); 7. a sign under which a Christian soldier fights (112); 8. a triumphal chariot to ride to eternal triumph (113); 9. Zacchaeus' sycamore tree from which triumphal Christ can be seen (113); 10. the mount Tabor on which the apostles saw the glory of God (115); 11. the key to open doors of paradise (116, 141), a source of God's blessings, the rainbow after the flood, an imperishable wreath (116).<sup>17</sup> The list ends with a patriotic accent: may Andrew's cross be a weapon against the enemies of Russia (119). If this is not enough, some other renderings are added: the cross is a seal/stamp (135, 142), the throne of God from which sin is judged (136), our salvation (138), shield, hope, resurrection, guide, comforter, wisdom, philosophy of emperors, the foundation of the church (142).

However, Buzhinskii was not a master of metaphors and similes. Some of them are forced and rather contrived. For example, he spoke about the four wills of Christ (the ordering will of the heavenly Father; obedient will; the will ready for all suffering; the will perfecting everything) which were like riding in the 4-wheel chariot from Ezekiel's vision (44-45). It is difficult to see what these wills have to do with riding in a chariot. Sometimes, his metaphors are in a

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<sup>17</sup> Most of this list was provided by Iavorskii in a sermon from which Buzhinskii took freely many phrases and sentences, Яворский, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 97-104.

bad taste, even bizarre. For instance, he spoke about the many triumphal entries of the monarch to cities, often on a horse. In Christ's entering Jerusalem on a donkey, the donkey symbolizes a sinful man; "the Lord needs him for his triumph and on him he joyously enters Jerusalem while heavenly hosts rejoice ... Oh, my Savior, who among us would not want to carry you? I am the first sinner, I am a beast for you; you, sitting on the horses, on your apostles, sit on me and with the bridle of your commandments harness my passions! ... Who would not want to be such a donkey, carrying not a yoke, but God?" (661). Some metaphors are driven by pure nationalism. For example, he mentioned some ways of explaining the difficult theological problem of the Trinity: Gregory of Nazianzus used an image of the sun, its light and warmth (517), the Nicene Council used an image of water. However, Buzhinskii confidently stated that the best image of the Trinity can be seen in Alexander Nevskii (518): in likeness of the Father, he took care of the flock given to him for protection by not only defending the realm of Russia, but also cared about the happiness of people (519); by his humility, Nevskii was an image of the Son (521); and he was an image of the Holy Spirit in that he brought many fruits to Russia, and he was joyful at the moment of death. We see in him fatherly care, filial love, spiritual desire to fulfil God's commandments (525). Important as Nevskii, a Russian prince and saint, is in Russian history, it is rather difficult to see how his person is the best illustration of the Trinity.

Imperfect as Buzhinskii's rhetoric at times was, his pastoral messages were strong. However, the spirituality of these messages was all too often marred by using religion for political reasons, primarily to support the social and military policies of Peter. Buzhinskii the pastor too often spoke as a state propagandist using religious language to justify tsarist actions. In this, his adulation of Peter knew no bounds<sup>18</sup> and his obsequious attitude severely undermined the religious aspects of his sermons. In this, he followed Prokopovich, a major theological

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<sup>18</sup> His enthusiasm frequently "crossed the boundaries of moderation", as phrased by Филарет, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

enforcer of Peter's policies<sup>19</sup> thereby being only a civil servant serving the needs of his emperor.

### Summary

Buzhinskii was a well-educated, high-ranking ecclesiastic during the reign of Peter I. In his sermons, Buzhinskii devoted as much attention to the role of religion in personal life as to the nationalistic message presented in the religious context aimed primarily at the glorification of tsar Peter I. although his pastoral messages are mostly uncontroversial from spiritual standpoint, they are too often marred by nationalistic and political aspects.

**Key Words:** Orthodoxy, Peter I.

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<sup>19</sup> И[лларион А.] Чистович, *Феофан Прокопович и его время*, Санкт-Петербург: Типография Императорской Академии Наук 1868, p. 605; for some time, Buzhinskii and Prokopovich lived in the same building, p. 329.

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