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Andrei Bolotov's eschatology

The problem of the immortality of the soul was a frequently raised topic among Russian authors – ecclesiastical or otherwise – in the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, particularly because of deistic and even atheistic tendencies creeping into Russia particularly from France. To be sure, for believers, an eternal life could not be trifled with, so arguments were given to convince readers that the soul is immortal, which had practical consequences, namely the earthly life would have to be conducted with an eye on the fate of the soul after death. Andrei Timofeevich Bolotov (1738-1833) is known today primarily for his articles on agriculture, pomology, and horticulture, in many respects innovative and based on his observations and experiments. The scope of his interests was unusually wide and it encompassed theological topics. He discussed the problem of immortality of the soul and, to a greater extent than most Russian authors, the problem of eschatology in a dialogue between a grandfather and his grandson, *On the souls of dead people* (1823). As for most believers, for Bolotov, a sincere and ardent Christian, the problem of eschatology strongly depended on theology, so, in his view, to understand the manner of immortality, one has to know who God is.

God

Bolotov presented his theology in his *Philosophy for children* written in the form of dialogues between Ms. Ts. and her children, 14-year old daughter Feona and 13-year old son Kleon. For dramatic reasons, occasionally other persons also appear, particularly to illustrate the seriousness of ignorance in religious matters. Influenced by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's books, Bolotov wrote his book, as the title suggests, for children, but, interestingly, it was primarily aimed at his prospective wife (Zh 2.443).²

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² Following references will be used:
C – Christian August Crusius, *Anweisung vernünftig zu leben*, Leipzig: Gleditsch 1767³ [1744]. The book put Bolotov on a straight philosophical path (Zh 2.64).

The first part of his *Philosophy for children* discusses at length attributes of God, which is really an unpacking of a scholarly sounding definition provided by one Gramoteev (LiterateMan), “God is a being without cause and a cause of everything, all-powerful and existing before all causes and [all] beings” (D 92, 105). The attributes are then summarized twice providing a list of 15 attributes and then an extended list of 20 attributes. God is 1. Creator, 2. perfect, 3. invisible and inconceivable, 4. eternal, and His attributes include 1. eternity (again), 2. self-existence, 3. immutability, 4. omnipresence, 5. omniscience, 6. omnipotence, 7. happiness, 8. supreme wisdom, 9. holiness, 10. justice, 11. truthfulness, 12. love, 13. goodness, 14. grace, 15. compassion, and 16. long-suffering (181, 202-204). The attributes are fairly uncontroversial for any Orthodox believer,³ but

C2 – Christian August Crusius, *Entwurf der nothwendigen Vernunft-Wahrheiten*, Leipzig: Gleditsch 1745.

D – Андрей Т. Болотов, *Детская философия*, Санкт-Петербург: Петрополис 2012 [1776-1779].

DSV – Андрей Т. Болотов, Дюжина сотен вздохов, чувствований и мыслей христианских, in: *Российский архив: история отечества в свидетельствах и документах XVIII-XX вв.*, vols. 2-3, Москва: Студия Тритэ 1992 [1991-1998], pp. 471-539.

G – Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Erste Gründe der gesammten Weltweisheit, darinn alle philosophische Wissenschaften in ihrer natürlichen Verknüpfung abgehandelt werden*, Leipzig: Breitkopf 1733-1734. Bolotov stated that he owed a lot to Gottsched (Zh 1.959).

Goeze – Johann Melchior Goeze, *Betrachtungen über den Zustand der Welt, und der Menschen, nach dem jüngsten Gerichte*, Breslau: Korn 1765 [1753]. Bolotov translated this book into Russian (Zh 3.1006).

H – Johann Adolf Hoffmann, *Zwey Bücher von der Zufriedenheit nach den Gründen der Vernunft und des Glaubens*, Hamburg: Johann Carl Bonn 1766⁴ [1722]. Bolotov considered the book to be a foundation of peace and happiness in his life (Zh 1.896).

Iz – Из неизданного литературного наследия Болотова, *Литературное наследство* 9-10 (1933), pp. 153-221.

JS – Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, *Sämmtliche Schriften*, Stuttgart: Henne 1835-1838, in particular, *Siegesgeschichte der christlichen Religion* [1799], 3.3-412; *Nachtrag zur Siegesgeschichte* [1805], 3.413-580; *Theorie der Geisterkunde* [1808], 6.359-620; *Apologie der Theorie der Geisterkunde* [1809], 6.621-671.

O – Андрей Т. Болотов, *О душах умерших людей. Разговору старика со внуком*, Санкт-Петербург: Алетейя 2006 [1823].

P – Андрей Т. Болотов, *Путеводитель к истинному человеческому счастью или опыт нравоучительных и отчасти философических рассуждений о благополучии человеческой жизни и средствах к приобретению оногo* [1784], in his *Детская философия* 2012, pp. 353-846.

Zh – *Жизнь и приключения Андрея Болотова, описанные самим им для своих потомков*. Санкт-Петербург: Головин 1870-1873.

³ Cf. a rather modest discussion of the attributes of God provided by metropolitan Platon, *Katechizis*, in his *Поучительные слова*, Москва 1778-1806, vol. 8, pp. 158-162. Bolotov mentioned having liked to read Platon's theology (Zh 2.852).

Bolotov may have been helped in his systematization efforts by Gottsched⁴ and Crusius.⁵

Among these attributes, perfection and perfect wisdom are important for the proof of the immortality of the soul. Perfection implies that God does nothing in vain, and Bolotov frequently emphasized this aspect of God's work.⁶ Already Aristotle spoke about nature doing nothing in vain, which statement Bolotov could easily accept, since the existence of nature presumed the existence of God who created it, and thus nature does nothing in vain since God created it that way, so Bolotov could say, "nature, or to say it better, the infinite Creator" (P 773). However, Bolotov was influenced in that respect by the many German books he read rather than by Aristotle. The fact that God does nothing in vain constantly reappeared in these books. "It is contrary to the perfection of God to create something completely unnecessary or in vain" (C 7); "doing something in vain contradicts the concept of the perfect being" (267, 301). "God cannot do anything existence of which generally or consideration of which would ever be in vain" (C2 505, 941). Perfect spirit – and God is such a spirit – does nothing in vain (G 1.318, 591, 2.9). God's rationality is perfect and so "on account of His wisdom, God cannot make any roundaboutness and do anything futile. Thus, there will also be in the world nothing in vain," and hence He created the best of worlds (1.571); "God's wisdom does nothing in vain, and in the least a work of wonder."⁷

The immortality of the soul

According to Bolotov, claims about the mortality of the soul are "nothing more than rubbish that is not worthy of any attention" and proofs of the immortality of the soul are unshakable (O 33). The fools that claim otherwise do that since they want the soul to die with the body so that after death there will be no accounting for their lives; also, they are deceived by evil spirits that are everywhere in large numbers to snatch such unbelievers to hell after their death. That happens a lot among Russian simple and stupid people (34).

There are a number of such unshakable proofs that counter the claims of unbelievers.

⁴ A discussion of the attributes of God is given in part 6, "Natural teaching on God," of "Theoretical wisdom" of his *Erste Gründe* (G 547-585); in later editions this became segment 3, "On an infinite spirit or on God", of the fourth part, *Geisterlehre*, of theoretical wisdom.

⁵ Attributes of God are presented in ch. 2 of the second part, "The theoretical natural theology," of his *Entwurf* and are summarized on pp. 596-597.

⁶ D 138, 150, 151, 153, 203, 287; P 362, 377, 395, 448, 677, 736; O 35.

⁷ Th.Ch. Lilienthal, *Die gute Sache der in der heiligen Schrift alten und neuen Testaments enthaltenen göttlichen Offenbarung*, Königsberg 1750-1781, vol. 1, pp. 114, 189, vol. 8, p. 972. Lilienthal argued against deists (Zh 1.124), which Bolotov appreciated since this discussion helped him a lot and Lilienthal's books belonged to his favorite readings in Königsberg (124-125).

Proof 1. Humans are born with a desire to live forever; however, the perfect God who does nothing in vain could not have created humans with such a universal desire if it were impossible to fulfill (O 35). In this, Bolotov was in agreement with his German readings in which he found statement that there is an in-born desire to be happy given us by God (G 2.44) and since God does not do anything in vain (C 7, 301), so our search for happiness cannot be in vain either (362; H 8). The soul with its power of thinking and willing is immortal, otherwise, “why should God, God, I say, who has the desire for perfection, want to annihilate this beautiful being? Why did He fill our soul with an infinite longing? Should the highest Being have done that in vain?”⁸ Also, “if we had no other hope than in this life, then we would surely be the most miserable among all creatures.” This is an ethical proof of immortality and it is much stronger than other proofs.⁹

Proof 2. All nations have beliefs concerning an eternal life and thus such a general agreement could not be dismissed as mere coincidence (O 36).

Proof 3. Regardless of how happy someone is in this life, there is always a sense of something lacking to be fully happy, which can be expected in a future life.¹⁰ This is somewhat similar to the first proof: since God does nothing in vain, the sense of something lacking and thus the desire to get more from life cannot be in vain, either, and thus, prolongation of life after death is necessary for this desire to be fulfilled. An argument of that kind was frequently used by other Russian authors, to mention Bratanovskii, Anichkov, and Zolotnitskii.

Proof 4. It is hard to believe that humans, rational beings, whose thought can reach the entire universe and go beyond the realm of visibility, would be created for a short time of life on earth, the life filled with labor and sorrow, and so many people die before they can even enjoy their lives (O 36); could God bring people only for this short time on earth? (37).¹¹

⁸ H.F. Reischauer, *Vernünftige Gedanken über die Werke der Natur*, Lemgo 1747, p. 13. Bolotov listed this book among recommended readings in his *Guide to true human happiness* (P 671).

⁹ S. Formey, *Der christliche Philosoph*, Göttingen 1754, vol. 1, p. 190. The book was part of Bolotov’s library with his name inside, О.Е. Глаголева, Библиотека А.Т. Болотова, in: А.А. Зайцева (ed.), *Книга в России XVI - середина XIX в.*, Ленинград 1987, p. 81.

¹⁰ O 36; C 301-302. “By nature I want to be happy, to rest, I seek the imperishable; I don’t find any of it on earth and thus I know that there should be after this life another life, where the soul can participate in perfect rest about for which it strives in this life without fully reaching it. Not in vain nature poured into my spirit this constant desire of rest and happiness. This is a benchmark of its imperishability” (H 269).

¹¹ The soul is too noble to cease to exist after death; it hardly exhausts all its abilities in this life, so it would be created in vain (G 1.315). Sulzer, who awoke in Bolotov physico-theological thinking (Zh 1.862, 960), quoted Karl Friedrich Drollinger’s ode *About the immortality of the soul*: “Is it possible that God destroys you: / He made you too great and too beautiful / Look, what a splendor/ what fruits / Come into being from the drive of a noble soul!/ ... That does not die what is divine,” J[ohann] G[eorg] Sulzer, *Versuch einiger moralischen Betrachtungen über die Werke der Natur*, Berlin: Haude und Spener 1750 [1745], p. 81.

Proof 5. Only a few people live exemplary lives and a few among them are rewarded for their lives; on the other hand, most people violate the laws of God and many of them were never punished for it; the justice of God and common sense require that this will be rectified after death (O 37; D 170; C 303). One author said that virtue can be active “under the conviction about [the existence] of a Providence and the fortifying prospect of eternity, where it can live in the growing perfection in the presence of God”; otherwise, a question would arise how God could create the world in which vice can triumph and virtue will not be rewarded.¹²

Proof 6. Sacred Scriptures speak about eternal life (O 38). Since previous proofs are derived by reasoning, they have to be enhanced by direct revelation as provided by the biblical testimonies.¹³

Proof 7. Many Christians became martyrs for their faith. Were they so foolish that they did it for an illusion of eternal life? (O 39).

Proof 8. There are some instances that the souls of the dead visited the living and even conversed with them (O 40).

Most of these arguments have been used frequently before Bolotov, also on the Russian ground, to mention only Zolotnitskii, Kandorskii, and Shcherbatov. The last argument would be the most controversial for an Orthodox believer, although Greek fathers testified about apparitions of prophets, saints, the Mother of God and Jesus, not just any person, so Bolotov reached for help to Jung-Stilling (O 70), whose many books were translated into Russian at that time.

Pneumatology

We don't exactly know, said Bolotov, if the soul looks like a living person, but such claims have been made; this is supported by claims of those who saw souls of the deceased who looked like when they were living (O 43). We know nothing about the size of the soul; maybe this size changes; maybe it is a subtle aethereal body.¹⁴ We do not know if these souls are like angels that can appear in

¹² [Johann Friedrich Wilhelm] Jerusalem, *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion*, Braunschweig 1770 [1768], p. 239. Bolotov read Jerusalem's work (Zh 2.125) and expressed his respect to this “famous theologian” (4.1150). Why should I serve God? What would happen to God's justice concerning rewards and punishments?, asked H.F. Reischauer, *Vernünftige Gedanken über die Werke der Natur*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹³ A rational proof becomes certain through revelation by which God promised us immortality, ¹³ S. Formey, *Der christliche Philosoph*, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-192. In fact, Goeze considered all proofs of the immortality of the soul made by natural reason too unreliable to be seriously considered (Goeze 250) and used only proofs from revelation, which, actually, included a grain of reasoning; one of his proofs stated that since Jesus was resurrected, we will also be resurrected and we will live forever (339).

¹⁴ The human soul is an animal soul made out of aether, luminous fluid, and the spirit created in the image of God (JS 6.403); after death, the soul “still retains a subtle body” (G 1.315 follow-

any form (44). People claimed to have seen souls of the dead; maybe only some people are able to see souls. The appearing souls moved very quickly (45). We don't know if the soul permeates the whole body or resides in the head or only in a part of the brain (46).¹⁵

It is possible that souls stay right after death in the atmosphere for, say, six weeks and then they are transferred to some place depending on their qualities to remain there until the universal resurrection of the dead (49). Incidentally, according to Orthodox religion, the soul can linger up to three days close to the body.

Souls do not lose any of their faculties at the death of the body; in fact, these faculties are enhanced so that souls have perfect memory (JS 6.405, 564, 638; G 1.315; O 47), and although they will not be omniscient, they will have superior knowledge (O 50). Of course, the souls retain their intellect and will (47) and so they retain their individuality. They will probably have something similar to sensory sensation, but we cannot say anything how it will happen (48).

Emotions and passions do not stop being active at death (O 47, 52; Goeze 231, 527). Take people who think only about hunting or about orchards (a tinge of self-deprecation here) so that they do not think about themselves and about life after death (O 53); they will suffer after death if these desires continue without being able to fulfill them. On earth desires become weaker and can stop, but after death they apparently are sharpened and can go on without end (54). Souls can see after death the lives of other souls that are better off and are not tormented by passions, so the former souls will be jealous of the state of the latter and suffer even more (55). Their jealousy will be increased by the realization that they did not purify themselves from sin through Christ and will fear punishment, whereas other souls will be rewarded (56). They suffer from passions that are all active at the same time and from memories of all their misdeeds and sinful words and missed opportunities for good deeds (57).

Many, many people from simple folks, especially women, will be unhappy after death and only very few people will do better than the narrating grandfather. On the other hand, there are more among simple folks more pleasing to God than we think (O 59). There are millions of souls in a bad state after death and incomparably fewer souls in good state. Blessed souls are the ones that in their whole life tried to improve their corrupted nature and tried to live according to the will of God (61); they tried to know the Creator, contemplated their future

ing Leibniz); however, Crusius criticized those who said that the soul may be a very subtle and pure fire, some subtle air, or purified fire as a materialist error, considering this view to be "a great foolishness" (C2 852-853); also, in his view, spirits are immaterial and they are able to move (684-685, 923).

¹⁵ In his *Philosophy for children* Bolotov claimed that the soul is in the head since we think with the soul and we feel that our thoughts are in the head (D 124). Jung-Stilling stated that the human soul is present in every part of the body, but its principal seat appears to be in the brain (JS 6.402-402).

lives, prayed to God, tried to purify their will from mundane things, did not allow passions to turn into habits (H 40), incited and magnified their good inclinations, particularly their love for God, themselves, and other people (O 62).

It is very likely that blessed souls will be in a different place than sinful souls. There are probably different places for different levels of blessedness and different places for different levels of sinfulness (O 65)¹⁶; thus, members of one family will not necessarily be in the same place (66). It is unknown what happens to the souls of the mentally incapacitated or of children and we don't know why God allowed their state to happen (67). Some say that such souls end up in a separate place in which they remain in peace¹⁷; others say that angels teach such souls how to use the reason, which will continue throughout their eternal life; still others maintain that they become angels (68) of the lowest rank to replace the fallen angels; this happens at least to the soul of the baptized; they serve as guardian angels particularly of their relatives (69). Some people claimed that they saw the souls of children (70).

Bolotov had no doubt that souls can appear to the living (O 71). Such a possibility was richly documented by Jung-Stilling in his *Theory of pneumatology*, and Bolotov relied on testimonies collected by Jung-Stilling and repeatedly referred to one incident, namely when the soul of the Polish king August II appeared right after death to the field-marshal von Grumbkow to tell him about his death (40, 46, 71-72, 74; JS 6.546). Bolotov tried to generally characterize such appearances of spirits. In his view, 1. souls after death remain briefly on earth; 2. some of them appear briefly to some people; 3. they can move instantaneously through long distances (O 72); 4. they cannot be touched and only some present people could see them; 5. the souls can see, hear, and speak; their conversations with the living were brief (73). Such claims would hardly be accepted by all Orthodox believers; in fact, also very few Catholics and Protestants would embrace Jung-Stilling and Bolotov's view on the nature of the appearance of spirits. Most of the time such an appearance would be attributed to the deceptive beha-

¹⁶ Prokopovich spoke about "the glory [in heaven] will be different and unequal," [Феофан Прокопович], *Разговор гражданина с селянином да певцем или дячком церковным*, in: П.В. Верховской, *Учреждение Духовной коллегии и Духовный регламент*, Ростов-на-Дону 1916, vol. 2, p. 67, and in hell there is "punishment of sinners according to the measure of their impurity," p. 66. Iavorskii, whose *The Rock of faith* Bolotov eagerly studied in his childhood (Zh 1.232), stated that just as there are many mansions in heaven and different rewards (J. 14:2), so there are many different punishments in hell, Стефан Яворский, *Камень веры*, Киев 1730, p. 667. Also, Rostovskii spoke about various compartments of hell fitting the sins of the condemned, *Келейный летописец святителя Димитрия Ростовского*, Москва 2000, p. 140.

¹⁷ To this category belongs the view that the souls of children after death are "in the hand of God" (Goeze 1.901) and parents will meet them in heaven after death (902). Crusius supposed that the souls of children enjoy the goodness of God, possibly to a lesser extent than the souls of those who were virtuous (C2 946).

vior of a demonic agency, although patristic tradition allowed for the existence of ghosts.¹⁸

Orthodoxy allows for the possibility that the state of the soul of the dead could be changed (O 95). When Christ said that the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven in this nor in the future life (Mt. 12:31-32), it implied that other sins can be forgiven after death (JS 6.543), and, thus, prayers for the dead can be beneficial (O 99).¹⁹ This is interesting because of the vehemence with which the Catholic idea of purgatory is rejected as an idea coming directly from satan (O 90). And so, Bolotov criticized Catholicism for its belief that the soul can be released from the purgatory through prayers for the dead and through church services for them (82). However, Bolotov did not make a good case for the unacceptability of the idea of purgatory considering the fact that the change of the state of the soul after death is possible through prayers. It appears that purgatory was simply folded into the otherworldly place of the departed souls and although it does not exist as a separate place, its functionality is fully retained. This means that quarrels concerning the existence of purgatory appear to be largely of a terminological nature.

Resurrection

Following the pattern of the six days of creation, Bolotov believed in six millennia that elapsed from the beginning of the world and in the coming seventh millennium that would correspond to the day of rest. This seventh millennium will be preceded by some awesome changes that will come very soon: earthquakes, persecutions, and wars (O 106).

At the start of the seventh millennium, the first resurrection will take place (Ap. 20:5); the resurrected will be rulers and judges over nations (Ap. 20:4, 6); nations will convert to Christianity and there will be no wars; this will be the kingdom of Christ on earth; people will be born and die, as now, except for the resurrected who will live forever (Ap. 20:6); the latter will have no need for food; their physiology will be different (O 114); they will not age, nor get sick. Other people will need food; they will work and live as describe by prophet Isaiah (115); they will not be free from bad inclinations, but evil spirits will not tempt them, so there will be fewer evil deeds. This will be because there will be truly enlightened shepherds, unlike today among simple people; church services will probably be different, they will be more spiritual (116). Those shepherds will better know what happens with souls after death and thus they will be more con-

¹⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *The soul and the resurrection*, Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press 1993, p. 76.

¹⁹ Jung-Stilling spoke about prayers for "the departed souls" (JS 6.565, 598).

vincing in their teachings. This may lead to the conversion of more people than in all six millennia before. Jews will convert to Christianity and will be gathered together (117).

At the end of the seventh millennium satan will be released from the bonds for a brief moment (Ap. 20:7; O 118). There will be the universal resurrection (Ap. 20:13) and the union of the soul and the body will be restored (O 120), although bodies perish at death, but "basic particles" composing them remain undisturbed and the will of God can bring them together.²⁰ New bodies may use only a very small number of these particles which God may preserve so that they do not become parts of other bodies (122). Some say that people will resurrect in their best years (123); some – at the age at which they died; but people will be different from one another and they will recognize one another. Those who died young will be resurrected at the ripe age which they would reach if they lived longer. They will wear nontransparent clothing made out of "most subtle aetheral particles." The clothing will shine on those who led good lives (124) and be dark on sinners where the level of darkness will depend of the level of their sinfulness (cf. JS 3.572, 6.541); this possibility is suggested by the shining cloths of Christ during His transformation on the Tabor mountain (Mt. 17:2) and by the appearance of angels (e.g., Lk. 24:4; J. 20:12; O 125). The minds will have a full control over new bodies; memory will be perfect (126; Goeze 228-229, 463-464). The living will experience a transformation of the body in the middle of their occupations, and, at the same time, all dead will be resurrected (127). This will take only several minutes. Right away, angels will separate the good from the evil; the good, as Paul said, will be raptured to heaven (1 Thess. 4:17); the sinners will experience conflagration of the earth, the sun, and the moon (2 P. 3:10; Goeze 81, 85, 89-92, 149; JS 3.383; O 128). They will ask mountains to cover them, but in vain (Ap. 6:16; Goeze 127). The saved will see this destruction of the world, but their thoughts will be occupied with future happiness (O 129).

This will be the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ in full glory (Ap. 19:11; O 131; Goeze 350); He will appear in air; angels will separate the saved from the condemned and the saved on His right will await promised salvation, the condemned on His left will await condemnation (Mt. 25:32-34, 41; O 132). Among the condemned there will be "many patriarchs, popes, archpriests and others put in leadership position of priesthood called shepherds of human souls but caring little about salvation of these souls." Evil spirits will be waiting for the condemned to bring them to eternal fire (O 133). Then, the last judgment:

²⁰ "The parts of our body do not cease to exist when it dissipates, they are only separated; consequently, it is possible that they will again be put together"; also, "the essential parts of a body will never become essential parts of another body; consequently, it is possible that at the resurrection everyone will again have their own body in respect to its essential parts," Th.Ch. Lilienthal, *Die gute Sache...*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 310.

each person will think about his deeds and thereby he will sentence himself, so the judgment will not take long, maybe until God creates the new heaven and earth (Is. 65:17, 66:22; 2 P. 3:13; Ap. 21:1; O 135). Afterwards, 1. there will be no contact between the saved and the condemned; 2. the condemned will be in a place surrounded by an unsurpassable barrier; 3. satan and the devils will be in the same place, which we call hell; Catholic clergy invented various tortures suffered by the condemned to support their purgatory, but the Scripture only says that his place is dark (Mt. 8:12)²¹ and the condemned will suffer from unending, eternal heat²²; there will be crying and gnashing of teeth (Mt. 13:42; Mk 9:43; Ap. 20:14; O 137) and the Apocalypse calls it a lake of fire (Ap. 20:15; O 138). The condemned will experience all desires, all of them at the same time, which will increase their suffering since these desires will never be fulfilled (O 139).²³ The condemned will be those who undermined Christianity, including Voltaire and others like him (140).²⁴ There will be different levels of suffering depending on severity of sins (141; Goeze 603, 710-711).

The new earth will not be a sphere: there will be no sun and there will be constantly a day (Ap. 21:23, 22:5; O 146). There will be rivers and trees (Ap. 22:1-3; O 148); there may be animals (O 149). There will be the new Jerusalem (Ap. 21:9-27; O 150) descended from heaven (Ap. 21:2, 10) which will be the capital with the throne of Jesus.²⁵ Since there is a street in it (Ap. 21:21), there will likely be buildings and homes for the inhabitants. Since John saw the city from a mountain, it was probably not a square about 2400 km long (Ap. 21:16), but more likely one side was 24 km (O 152). Since the city has gates to be used for an in and out traffic (Ap. 21:12, 24-26), there will likely be other cities in which there will be the blessed of the second level with kings over these cities.²⁶ There will be also the blessed of the third level, those living in the country. There

²¹ They will be “bound with the chains of darkness” (Goeze 153, 672), in “dark prison” (733).

²² The punishment in hell is eternal (Goeze 673), although the eternal fire should not be understood literally (729). In respect to eternity of punishment, Bolotov did not follow Jung-Stilling who claimed that all human souls will eventually be saved (JS 6.659, which is a view condemned by the church as an Orygenian heresy), some of them after spending some time in hades, which is the realm between the heaven and hell; this realm would thus be an equivalent of purgatory, notwithstanding Jung-Stilling’s protestation about the existence of purgatory (6.649-650).

²³ It will be the lust/longing for the world that is no more (Goeze 125, 723).

²⁴ Bolotov considered Voltaire, Helvetius and similar authors to be monsters who deprave the humankind (Zh 3.926-927). About Voltaire’s *Babylonian princess*, which was “in the stupidest way madeup and most incoherent fable filled with such rubbish, incoherence and absurdities which usually can be found in fables,” Bolotov wrote that, in reality, Voltaire had one goal when writing it: “to abuse everything what is good in the world to scold in the most venomous fashion all truths of the revealed law and all that is considered sacred in the world” (Iz 210).

²⁵ “The capital of the blessed humanity” (JS 3.388).

²⁶ These kings will “manage the celestial police” (JS 3.397).

will be other levels of blessedness.²⁷ John spoke about nations, plural (O 153). To the nations that will be on a low level of blessedness belong 1. nominal, not true, Christians (154); 2. Christians who led their lives in superstition and only before death they repented; 3. those who lived before Christ and led good life and believed in the true God, who were freed by Christ when He descended to hell (156)²⁸; 4. those who died young (157).

No doubt, there will be different levels of happiness (O 162; Goeze 470, 528; JS 3.396-397). There will be some people not allowed to enter the city (O 153). On the other extreme, there will be inhabitants of the new Jerusalem; this will be the highest level reserved for friends of Christ (Ap. 21:3-4, 22:3-4; J. 17:21-23; O 163). Between men and women there will be only "spiritual love and friendship" since people will not marry (Mt. 22:30; O 165). Enjoyment will come from seeing beauty (166), from listening to singing people and angels (167); they will converse with one another (169); there will be some occupations; maybe they will have some country estate and will occupy themselves with planting trees and plants and tending to them (171, which is a self-serving remark). The main occupation will be praising the triune God (praising Christ: Goeze 368), then thinking and talking about Him (O 173).

In Bolotov's entire presentation of the end times, there is a great sense of urgency. This is not an accident. Bolotov believed in Bengel's calculations which predicted that the seventh millennium should begin in 1836 and now, that is, when the dialogue in the book took place, it was 1823 (O 105).²⁹ So, in Bolotov's mind, humanity was merely 13 years away from the great tribulation followed by the millennial kingdom of God on earth. He wanted to instill in his readers' minds (although he never managed to publish his book having died in 1833) that there is very little time left to make amends by turning one's life around and turning oneself, through Christ, into the hands of God. After the fateful day arrives, there will be no going back and the fate of each person will be sealed for all eternity. To win over his potential readers, Bolotov presented a fairly detailed and alluring picture of the eternal life of the saved and used proofs of reality of the afterlife that he found convincing. In that respect, Bolotov was dou-

²⁷ According to Jung-Stilling the earth will remain a sphere; thus, one hemisphere will be dark and the level of blessedness will be determined by the distance from the new Jerusalem and its light (JS 3.396-397).

²⁸ Because Christ *descended* to hell, Bolotov would probably agree with Jung-Stilling that the earth is hollow inside and hell is in the middle of it (JS 6.646, cf. 6.370-371).

²⁹ The date was provided by Jung-Stilling (JS 3.138-140, 203, 250-251, 277, 366, 441, 456, 460, ch.3: 471-473) in which he followed computations made by J.A. Bengel, *Erklärte Offenbarung Johannis oder vielmehr Jesu Christi*, Stuttgart 1758 [1740], pp. 645, 1060-1061, 1092. It seems that Bolotov found the date first in Bengel whom he praised for his prediction of big unrests in Europe 30 years before the French revolution (O 103; Zh 4.1136, 1137). Incidentally, the name of Bengel should be familiar to any reader of Herman Hesse's *The glass bead game*.

bly original. Before him, only ecclesiastics were making some remarks about the world beyond the grave; secondly, their remarks were rather unimaginative and mostly repeated statements that can be found in the Bible, cf. writings of Prokopovich, Iavorskii, Zadonskii, Rostovskii, or sermons of Platon. Bolotov went far beyond what was presented before him about the afterlife. He had a tendency to treat literally Biblical statements, whereas the patristic tradition tended to spiritualize these statements frequently treating them as symbols of spiritual events to come.

One departure from the traditional Orthodox discussion of eschatology was, as already indicated, Bolotov's heavy reliance on Jung-Stilling and on the apparition of spirits. This is one point from which Bolotov departed from the Orthodox ways of bringing people to faith. This brings a question, how orthodox was his Orthodoxy? There is not the slightest doubt about his firm convictions about the basic truths of Christianity: the Trinity, the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, the necessity of each person to accept Christ to be saved. He regularly went to church (e.g. Zh 2.644, 803-804, 847, 888), his wedding was in church (2.539), he followed the church ritual of consecrating his new house by using holy water and going through a night vigil (2.802). However, his was primarily a religion of the heart, not of rites. He was upset by the fact that many people treat prayer as a ceremony made to observe old rites (P 636; cf. H 489); prayer, he said, should be talking to God "just as we usually talk without any rites or ceremony" and we should pray everywhere and in any place, standing or sitting (O 180; D 110). When crossing oneself or bowing before an icon only our body participates, not the soul (O 182). Only children can do that or those who lost their mind. On the other hand, a sincere believer concentrates on the spiritual aspect of such ritual gestures as bowing and crossing oneself. Invisible God is present during prayers "it's unbecoming to, in a way, irritate Him / by ridiculous waggling of head and some movements of hands"; "It will be pleasing to Him and He will accept your sigh rather than hundred bowings [made] without any thought and any feeling" (183; cf. DSV 500.20).

Being an Orthodox believer, he saw imperfections of the church. Bolotov was shocked by the level of ignorance of peasants concerning Christianity and the afterlife. Their Christianity was limited to following some rituals. However, it was not their fault: priests told them that they don't need to know any of it and many of the priests did not know what they are supposed to teach their flock (Iz 179-181). Thus, this ignorance with eternal consequences begins with the clergy. Bolotov experienced this ignorance from his youth when by his self-education he knew more about dogmas than priests and as he states with a touch of braggadocio, local priests considered him very well versed in matters of faith; they were, in fact, ignoramuses "and they didn't know white from black" (Zh 1.233, 2.58). Therefore, as mentioned, Bolotov saw among the condemned "many pa-

triarchs, popes, archpriests and other put in leadership position of priesthood" (O 133). Although, like most of his contemporaries, Bolotov berated Catholicism, sometimes he did not do too one-sidedly. Although he said that the Catholic church split from "our first and most orthodox, Greek faith," he saw the reason for the split in the pride and power of both patriarchs and popes (O 76). Sometimes it even appears that by criticizing Catholicism he really criticized Orthodoxy, when, for instance, writing about apparently Catholic believers who were told that there are some special sacred places in which prayers for forgiveness of sins were more effective than elsewhere, "particularly [prayers] made before miracle-working icons," and that in such places they should not spare their money (79). Interestingly, Bolotov spoke here about icons, which is the term used by Orthodoxy, not Catholicism. Bolotov also criticized the cult of the saints, the cult of statues of the saints, the belief that a person by becoming a monk "enters straight into the kingdom of heaven" (90); he criticized the establishment of long church services and long prayers that burden people, and prayers were speed-read so that no one understood them (91). In the end, Bolotov thought that there are many Christian denominations, but "the main points of the Christian law in all notable religions are in agreement [with one another] and the quarrels are to a large extent about side issues and sometimes about completely unimportant matters" (Iz 187). These quarrels created enmity between different denominations, which Bolotov found an undesirable feature of the church: "Oh! your enmity is indecent, oh, you, servants of the church, and can the Savior our Lord listen to your prayers... How needed for all of you is gentleness, humility, affection, and love, oh, you, serving every day in churches of Christ the Lord" (DSV 528.333-334). What Bolotov found essential was the faith in Christ: "Nothing can be more harmful in this short life for us as not trying right away to get to know Christ the Lord" (500.28) since without this acquaintance salvation is impossible (509.62). The better people know the glory of what awaits them after death, the more likely they will accept Christ, and with this in mind Bolotov penned down his vivid vision of the hereafter.

Andrei Bolotov's eschatology

Summary

Expecting the arrival of the seventh millennium in 1836, Bolotov wrote in 1823 his eschatological treatise in which he first presented proofs of the immortality of the soul followed by his vision of the afterlife. The proofs were mostly traditional, with one of the relying very heavily on Jung-Stilling's pneumatology. Bolotov also presented his vision of apocalyptic events: the first resurrection at the beginning of the seventh millennium, and at its end the second coming of Christ, the second resurrection, the last judgment, the end of the old world and the arrival of the new heaven and new earth. Bolotov also provided fairly detailed description of this new earth.

Keywords

Bołotow, Jung-Stilling, eschatology, Orthodoxy

Eschatologia Andrieja Bołotowa**Streszczenie**

Oczekując na przybycie siódmego tysiąclecia, które miało nastąpić w 1836 roku, Bołotow napisał w 1823 roku eschatologiczny traktat, w którym przedstawił dowody na nieśmiertelność duszy i swą wizję życia pozagrobowego. Były to głównie znane już dowody, jeden z nich natomiast opierał się na pneumatologii Junga-Stillinga. Bołotow przedstawił też swoją wizję apokaliptycznych wydarzeń: pierwsze zmartwychwstanie na początku siódmego tysiąclecia i na jego końcu przybycie Chrystusa, drugie zmartwychwstanie, sąd ostateczny, koniec starego świata i utworzenie nowego nieba i nowej ziemi. Bołotow dość szczegółowo opisał również ową nową ziemię.

Słowa kluczowe

Bołotow, Jung-Stilling, eschatologia, prawosławie

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