



From Glory to Glory: The Sophianic Vision of Fr. Sergius Bulgakov

Robert F. Thompson

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Intended for the interested general reader as well as for persons with informed acquaintance with the life and work of Fr. Sergius Bulgakov (d. 1944), this book provides an introduction to the "layers" of Bulgakov's multi-dimensional sophiology. Beyond this, the text proposes this sophiology as a useful interpretive lens for engaging with the range of contemporary concerns, both local and global, in trans-disciplinary ways. All this is done with reference to the best of recent English-language Bulgakov scholarship up through the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The late Orthodox spiritual writer, Philip Sherrard, wrote about "a single unified science." Such a science can only exist insofar as it is rooted in the wisdom/glory of God. Bulgakovian sophiology is therefore approached, in this study, from within a larger context than is usually accorded to it. This approach includes reference to what is sometime called The Great Tradition or the perennial wisdom. It is suggested that Bulgakov is best thought of as a visionary Christian writer and Christian humanist, and that his sophiology will continue to be relevant into the future because it is, in essence, a Christian expression of the unitive vision which both acknowledges and transcends modern (and postmodern) discernment of "difference."

Within the context of Christian Orthodoxy, Bulgakov's sophiology connects with the contemporary search for a more open, comprehensive, and progressive Orthodoxy rooted in liturgical practice and patristic spirituality. It is also suggested that sophiology, more broadly, is best understood as a particular approach, as opposed to a specific method, to understanding and addressing resistances (within ourselves) to the reign of heaven in the world today and in the years to come. As one student of Fr. Bulgakov is said to have characterized his theology/sophiology--it is "nothing but the experience of the Kingdom of God!"

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