

The Orthodox Christian Philosophy of Progress

There exists a certain cosmic conspiracy against our planet, because nowhere in the Universe there is death except upon our Earth. The Island of death, the sole island where living creatures die, is our bleak star. And above it, all around it, and under it billions of stars travel in circles and on them there is no death and no one dies. The abyss of death surrounds on all sides our planet. Is there a path that starts on this earth and does not collapse into the abyss of death? Is there a creature on this earth that can escape death? Everyone dies, everything dies on this horrible island of death. No destiny is gloomier than that of the earth and no tragedy is more hopeless than that of humankind. Why is man given life, when he is surrounded by death on all sides? The traps of death are spread in every place; darkness is cast over all human paths. Death—like a slimy and monstrous spider—has spun around our soot-blackened star its cobwebs and it keeps catching in them the human beings like some helpless flies. Man-eating menaces hem in on man on all sides and he has no place to go, because death is closing upon him from all corners. Why is man given consciousness when it encounters death in every place and every circumstance? Why is man given feelings? So as to see that the grave is his father and the worms—his brothers? Together with the much-suffering Job each of us is crying to the grave: Thou art my father, and to the worms: ye are my mother. Conscience is a grievous and frightful gift for man, but much more grievous and much more frightful gift is feeling. And the senses? Why were senses given to man: are they meant to serve him as tentacles with which he might feel death at every step in the history of humankind? Send your thought to this island of death in order that it would reveal to you the meaning of human existence and it shall return to you desperate and mournful, strewn from head to heels with the cold ashes of death. Send your feeling there and it shall come back to you covered with wounds and contused from the impassable gorges of death. Stretch only one of your sense toward any of the creatures that exist in history and it will undoubtedly touch death as an end to any of these.

Friends, death is the most obvious, the most universal reality in this world. Indeed, the last, the completed reality of human life on the earth is death. Tell me, is death not the last reality of both you and me? We are all infected by death, with no exception. The bacilli of death have corroded all tissues of our

being. Each of us carries within himself thousands of deaths. Our planet is being incessantly devastated by the chronic epidemic of death. There is no medicine which can save us from this epidemic; there is no quarantine wherewith people could be purged from the microbes of death. What is human life on the earth if not a repeated convulsive tearing oneself away from death, a struggle with death and finally—a rout at the hands of death? For in medical science, in human sciences, in philosophy we defeat not death itself, but her precursors: diseases and weaknesses. And our victory over them is but partial and temporary. What are the triumphs of science, philosophy and technology in the face of the hideous fact of pan-human mortality? Nothing but the din of confused and frightened children. If there is a tragedy in this world, then its centre is man. How tragic to be a human being! O, how much more tragic than being a tiger or a sheep, a snake or a bird, a snail or an insect. No matter how hard a man would try to overcome the tragedy of human life, he feels and is aware that he yet remains invariably a prisoner in the never-opening gaol of death—gaol with no windows and with no door.

Born in this world, since his very first instant man is already doomed to die. The womb which gives birth to us is nothing but a sister of the grave. Coming out of our mother's womb we take our first step on the path leading to the grave. No matter which road a man takes on this isle of death, he should sooner or later arrive to his grave. Every human being is a morsel which in the end is swallowed by the insatiable death, by "the omnivorous death." What is left to us, oh wretched slaves of death? Just the rebellion of a bitter smile and the spasms of a powerless heart.

Friends, along the long and horrible path of history so much death has been deposited and accumulated in man, that death has become the sole category within which the entire human life moves and exists, within which life springs, passes and perhaps ends. In human history a conviction was established: if anything is a necessity in this world, then it is death. This conviction became the nightmare of every historical epoch. The ghoulish reality of death forced humanity to formulate this conviction as a dogma: death is a necessity. And this ruthless dogma was handed over from father to son, from man to man and from generation to generation. If a man without any prejudice would inquire into the history of this miraculous world, he would be pressed to confess that the world is a gigantic mill of death which is perpetually grinding assemblages of men, from the first to the last one. It is grinding both you and me,

my friend, and all of us together, until one day or one night it will finally grind us over. Tell me, can a man be calm and accept this world without rebellion, when he is wedged between two heavy burrs in the mill of death—burrs, which will be grinding him until they grind him down completely? Can a fly be calm in the cobweb of the spider, or the mouse—in the mousetrap? In his horror a man feels that life is a macabre apparition and gruesome exile. It appears as though somebody has banished us into a foul spectral reality and we and this apparition are of one and the same matter. Man needs only to look so as to see that our planet is a field of apparitions, a field blanketed with human skulls. Moreover, a field framed by death on all sides. And the universe? Is the universe not a huge, a colossal sealed tomb in which humans, like desperate moles, constantly dig and can dig through in no wise?

The multifarious history of humankind is nothing better than an uproaring affirmation of death. All of its storms and winds, calms and exploits, all of its creators and fighters bear but one and only one testimony: death is a necessity; every human person is necessarily and inevitably mortal. This is the end of every human being, this is the testament, which every inhabitant of our planet inevitably bequeaths. Our ancestors have bequeathed to each of us this testament. Its contents consist of three words only: *death is a necessity*. Tell me, Friends, can a man be serene and happy with such a testament in the watermill of death? Is progress possible, logical and justifiable in a world, where death is the most invincible inevitability? This question means: has such a world, such life, such a human being any meaning at all? The question of progress is the question of the meaning of life. If in the watermill of death life has meaning, then progress has meaning too. The answer to this question is possible only through the answer to the question of death. By resolving the problem of death one actually resolves the principal problem. Directly and indirectly, all problems may ultimately be reduced to the problem of death. And he who solves this problem has solved the main problems of human consciousness and conscience. This is the problem through which all gods and all humans are put to the test. If any of them solves this problem, it means that he is God in truth, that there are no other gods and no other gods are needed.

Place the problem of death to the modern positivist science. To resolve the problem of life and death, science has mobilised all its forces, but all its efforts flow together into one conclusion: this world is ruled by natural laws which are necessary and unalterable; therefore death is also a natural law and is both ne-

cessary and unalterable; in such a world and for such man death is a necessity. Science invests into the mysterious word “necessity” its answer to the fearful problem of death. Doing this, however, it does not solve the problem, but merely states and affirms it. Such an answer from science confirms that death is a necessity. But, Friends, precisely this states the greatest of all curses on humankind. The corollary of this dogma of modern science is that: if death is a necessity, then human life has no meaning. A necessity is always a necessity; humankind is doomed to a permanent *status quo ante*, i.e. to permanent dying, since death is a necessity for all human beings. “[W]e believe”—communicated recently the well-known astronomer Professor James Jeans of the Cambridge University—that the universe is not a permanent structure. It is living its life and travelling the road from birth to death, just as we all are. For science knows of no change except the change of growing older, and of no progress except progress to the grave. So far as our present knowledge goes, we are compelled to believe that the whole material universe is an example, on the grand scale, of this.”¹

Since death is the only natural end of man and of the universe itself, the genuine progress is fundamentally impossible; not only impossible, but also unnecessary. Because what do I need progress for, when it consists in solemnly conveying me from the cradle to the grave? It is the same as though you were condemned to death and the executioner would apply honey to his sword so that it would feel sweeter when your head is being chopped off... Why is, then, progress given me, why is life, why is all the toil, why is labour, duty, love and hate, culture and civilisation, when I am to die entirely and without remainder? All those things before which people bow their heads: progress, culture, civilisation, work, duty, moral, fatherland, family: these are all vampires that are sucking and sucking and sucking my blood... May they be accursed!

Let us be honest, Friends: if death is a necessity, then this life must be the most sarcastic gift, the most abhorrent mockery and, above all, a horror, an intolerable horror... To science, the necessity of death is irremediable and invincible. This means that science can neither find nor give any meaning to life. Science itself is powerless when facing the problem of death. Many are those who say that science is power, science is might. But tell me: is this a power which stands powerless before death, which is, indeed, the powerful one? Is this a might which is feeble in the face of death, which is actually the mighty one?

¹ James Jeans, *The Stars in Their Courses*, 1931, p. 138

Powerful is only the power which can overcome death. They say that science is humane. But what's the use of a humaneness, which lets man down in death, which is incapable of preventing his death? Humaneness is to conquer death. No other exists.

Friends, put the problem of death before any philosophy at all: old or new. Behold, the logic of all philosophies can be epitomised in a single principle: the categories of human thinking prove the impossibility of conquering death; death is the logical corollary of the caducity of the human being, wherefore death is an inescapable necessity... Such an answer prompts me to inquire: how can philosophy give meaning to human life, when it resolves in such a manner the momentous problem of death? Indeed, the various philosophies are nothing better than the arithmetic of pessimism. When a man looks at the world from the edge of the grave, then no philosophy at all could sweeten for him the bitter mystery of death.

Put the problem of death to the humanistic culture of Europe. To many men has the naive European culture given the wings of hope. But these wings are too feeble to raise a man above death. Death mercilessly hacks their very roots into pieces. And the man of culture feels tragically impotent, facing the frightful fact of death. Stand at the edge of your grave and measure culture on the scales of your conscience; behold, it is lighter than nought. In the face of death culture wriggles into a convulsed zero. Death gradually corrodes and pushes down into its dismal abyss all of its acquisitions. Is culture, being powerless to conquer death, really endowed with the power which many ascribe to it? What use is it for a man if he is cultured: cultured in the watermill of death that today of tomorrow shall grind both himself and his culture? Put the problem of death before to the non-Christian religions. They are all taking pains at it; and when solving it they either circumvent it, or deny it, or jump over it. The most typical of these are Brahmanism and Buddhism. To Brahmanism death is the same as the whole visible world: Maya, delusive reality, non-being, non-existence. The problem of death is referred to as some kind of self-proclaimed realities deserving to be overcome through the power of self-will. The entire visible world is an exhibition of visions turning into unreal phantoms. Explaining the problem of death in this way, Brahmanism is not solving it but merely denying it. How about Buddhism? Buddhism reaches the ripe age of despair: it is not only a philosophy, but also a religion of pessimism. The mystery of non-existence is more pleasant than the bitterest mystery of ex-

istence. Death is the liberation from the shackles of this appalling monstrosity known as the world. After death, nirvana is the bliss. In such way Buddhism does not resolve the problem of death, but merely overlooks it; it does not conquer death, but curses it in its despair. Likewise, all other religions go into total bankruptcy when facing the problem of death.

Friends, you shall discover the value, the real value of every science, of every philosophy, of every religion and of every culture if you consider them in the context of death. Through science as well as through philosophy and the numerous religions man is attempting to conquer death, but to no avail... Man is alone and all around him in treacherous silence lies the boundless ocean of death... Enslaved by death, man is roaring in the sighs of his heart and no one heeds him: no man, no god. And if science or philosophy or culture would stutter something, all their words are but faint narcosis, which can in no way put to sleep the horror, which death has awoken in the human soul. Behold, man and humankind have no way out of the accursed watermill of death. Our scowling planet possesses also a centripetal force for all things mortal, man included. All the electrical charge of pain, horror and tragedy are concentrated into one thunder: the thunder of death, against which no lightning-conductor exists. Death is the supreme evil: the synthesis of all evil things the supreme horror: the synthesis of all horrors; the supreme tragedy: the synthesis of all tragedies. In the face of this supreme evil, this supreme horror and this supreme tragedy the whole spirit of man and of all mankind falls in despair and powerlessness... Progress? Oh, but what is all human progress if not a progress towards death, a progress toward the grave? All the progresses in the watermill of death end in death. Friends, all the activities of humankind throughout its history bear witness to one thing and confirm only one thing: it is impossible for man to conquer death. And if this is the last and final conclusion, then what reason is there to live? What reason is there to create history, live in history, engage in battle with history? Is not the history of mankind, which is nothing else, but a ruthless and tyrannical dictatorship of Death, a mockery of the human being and his progress? Let us not deceive ourselves: death is the triumph of tyranny and tragedy, and, alas!—the feast of irony and comicality... Pitiably and comical it is to be a man, when one is destined to live in the mill of death, seeing how it ruthlessly grinds a man after a man, a generation after a generation, and feeling how it grinds him alone, little by little, until it grinds him down completely... This wretched and ridiculed being called man is powerless, absolutely powerless to

conquer death. What then? Is there a way out? Yes, there is. What is impossible for man proved possible only for one Being in all the worlds. Which one? Christ the God-Man. Christ the God-Man has vanquished death. In what way? Through His Resurrection. And by this victory He has resolved the accursed problem of death. He has solved it not theoretically, not in an abstract or *a priori* manner, but through the event, through the experience, through the fact, the historical fact of His Resurrection from the dead.

Friends, no other event—not only in the Gospel, but in the entire history of mankind—is as strongly, as cogently and as irrefutably certified as Christ’s Resurrection. In its total historical reality and power Christianity is founded on the fact of Christ’s Resurrection. By its all-triumphant power this event has imposed itself as the core of Christianity. If Christianity should be reduced to a single event, then this event is Christ’s Resurrection. The foundation of Christianity is Christ’s Resurrection. It is a basic fact, if one does not proceed from it, one could never unriddle the mysterious Personality of Jesus of Nazareth. With His Resurrection the Lord Christ has explained Himself and His Theanthropic Personality to the world. Before His Resurrection He was teaching about eternal life, but only after His Resurrection He proved He truly is life eternal. Before His Resurrection He taught people about the victory over death, but only after His Resurrection He vanquished death and gave power to all men, so that they, too, could vanquish death in both their souls and bodies. In a word, all of Christ’s teachings acquire their experimental confirmation and explanation only in His Resurrection.

Without Christ’s Resurrection Christianity could never be explained. If you please, how would you account for the dauntless preaching of the Apostles about the Resurrected Christ: those self-same Apostles, who were terror-stricken and frightened by Christ’s death on Golgotha, who had abandoned Him in their fear? How will you account for this, in what way will you explain it? Only with Christ’s Resurrection. If Christ had died and never rose from the dead, Saint Chrysostom rightfully asks, who then would care to preach about Him as God and Saviour? Who would follow Him and would suffer death for Him? If Christ did not rise from the dead, who would inspire the Apostles—those weak, desperate and scared fugitives—to preach about a dead man? And what reward could they expect from that dead man, what honour? Why, they abandoned Him, the living One, when He was captured; how could, then, stand so fearlessly for Him after His death, if He had not risen from the dead? No, no!

They could not, they would not dare to invent Christ's Resurrection, if it had not really happened. Many a time, while still alive, the Saviour would speak about His Resurrection to them, but they could understand nothing. Therefore, if Christ did not rise from the dead, they, hunted by the entire [Jewish] people, banished from town to town, would finally give up on Him and cease to proclaim a certain Resurrection of His. If Christ's Resurrection had indeed never happened, but was invented by the Apostles, then what could they rely upon, preaching such a fabrication? Perhaps on the the eloquence of their words? But they were ignorant people. Perhaps on wealth? But they had neither bags, nor staff, nor shoes. Perhaps on noble origin? But they were poor and born of poor parents. Perhaps on renowned birthplace? But they came from unknown villages. Perhaps on their great number? But they were only eleven. Perhaps on their Teacher's promises? But if He were not risen from the dead, then all the rest of His promises would not be trustworthy in their eyes. And how would they be able to quench the people's rage? When the brave Peter, afraid of the maid, denied Christ, and all the other disciples fled in disorder as cowards; how would they, then, dare even to think about going to all nooks of the world, sowing in every place the fictitious story of the Resurrection? If one of them was frightened by the maid and the rest of them, by the mere sight of the chains, how then could they stand before kings, rulers and peoples, against swords, hot cauldrons, countless kinds of daily deaths: how could they do this, had not the Risen Lord Christ fortified them with His Divine power? Yes, yes: all of this was done by the power of the Risen God-Man.

Without Christ's Resurrection one could not explain not only the apostleship of the Apostles, but also the martyrdom of the Martyrs, the confession of the Confessors, the hierarchical exploit of the Holy Hierarchs, the Miracles of the Wonder-workers; without it one cannot explain neither the the faith of those who believe, nor the love of those who love, nor the hope of those who hope, nor any Christian exploit whatsoever. If Christian Faith is not the faith in the Resurrected and, therefore, the Ever-living and Life-bestowing God-Man Christ, who then would inspire, throughout the centuries, millions of people to believe in Christ, to love Him, to live in Him? Who would guide them through the holy Evangelic virtues and exploits? In a word, if Christ's Resurrection were not real, then Christianity would not exist either. Christ would be the first and the last Christian, who expired and died on the cross, and along with Him—

both His teachings and His work. Then the words of the pitiable Nietzsche: “The first and the last Christian was crucified on Golgotha,” would be true.

Friends, the Resurrection of Christ the God-Man is a *coup-d’etat*—the first radical *coup-d’etat* and the first true Revolution in the history of mankind. It divided history in two parts. In the first part the dominating motto was: death is a necessity. In the second part began to dominate the motto: immortality is a necessity. Christ’s Resurrection splits human history in two; before the Resurrection true progress was impossible, after the Resurrection it became possible. From the fact of Christ’s Resurrection the philosophy of the Resurrection was born, which irrefutably demonstrates and proves that not death, but immortality is a necessity; not death’s victory, but the victory over death. Only on the basis of this fact and on life, built upon Christ’s Resurrection, is true progress possible.

The practical conviction and the philosophical dogma, postulating that death is a necessity, is the pinnacle and maturity of pessimism. This dogma has its corollaries in the principles: sin is a necessity, evil is a necessity. But the philosophy of the Resurrection also has its corollaries and they are: sinlessness is a necessity, good is a necessity. The God-Man Christ’s Resurrection being a fact, an event, an experience, therefore there exists not a single theanthropic virtue, which cannot become a fact, an event, an experience in human life.

The fact of Christ’s Resurrection is not limited either in time or space. In every aspect it is as boundless and infinite as is the very Person of Christ the God-Man. It is a fact and an event of all-human significance and momentum; it grows in the myriads of lives of all Christians, since Christians are Christians because through their faith in the Risen Lord Christ they become members of His Theanthropic Body: the Church. The Church is nothing else, but a never-ceasing and endless continuation of one event, one fact: Christ’s Resurrection. It is a new organism, a new reality, boundless, endless, immortal. There exist no limits in either time or space. The fact of Christ’s Resurrection is the foundation of the Church, the foundation of Christianity and of every Christian. If a man is not building himself upon it, then he is building upon quicksand, since all other foundation apart from this one are nothing more than quicksand.

Through His Resurrection the God-Man broke the vicious circle of death: He accomplished the transition from death to immortality, from time to eternity. In His Person, man has also accomplished this transition, but already not as human, but as God-man. That is why the Resurrection is a central fact: the en-

tire Christian pragmatics and the entire Christian life are drawn from it and reduced to it. There is one single thing required of man: to assimilate this fact, to live this experience, to rise himself from the tomb of all that is mortal, uniting his soul, by way of faith, to the Risen Lord Christ.

Christ's victory over death made possible the infinite progress of man and mankind towards divine perfection. As a matter of fact, true progress consists in the victory over death, in immortalising the soul and the body, in salvation from death, to wit: in salvation from sin and evil, which are the sole sources of death. If death is the end of man and mankind, then all aspirations of man toward progress are the most accursed and most derisive quality, which one has put in man, in order to mock him as spitefully as possible. In this case, it is best and most consistent to freeze in an inertia of despair and commit a suicide, because life would be an intolerable tyranny and unbearable jest.

Many are those who do not recognise the Resurrection and the victory over death, and yet speak about progress. But all these progresses, whether scientific or philosophical, whether in art or culture, are nothing more than concentric circles, inscribed into the circle of death. A progress which betrays mankind and allows man's death, is not a [genuine] progress, but a false progress. If progress is incapable of giving meaning to both life and death, to immortalise man and mankind, then it is no progress at all, but a mere regress in disguise. Such are all progresses, except the progress, founded on the resurrected God-Man. If death is not vanquished and immortality is not secured through resurrection, then there is no true progress in the frightful watermill of death, then all people without exception are slaves of death, lackeys of death, grist of death. If so, then why do we live, oh millers of progress, in this watermill of death? So as to be ultimately and completely ground by the mill of death without a remainder?... Yes, yes: every progress, which is not founded on the immortality of the human person, represents only naïve and fantastical tales and legends, which the miserable citizen of this planet is dreaming of. In whose embrace? In the abominable embrace of the dragon—death.

The word "progress" literally means any progressing movement. Through its multifarious activities—religious, philosophical, scientific, technical, economical—mankind is obviously moving and pacing forward, but towards what? No doubt, towards death as its ultimate reality. Born in the watermill of death, grown inside of it, people, all people with their progresses are ultimately ground by death. Consider the mystery of human progress and if your reason

has not been etherised with the morphia of naïve humanism and your heart is not inebriated with the opium of cultural idolatry, or the worship of material things, then you should be able to discover, that through its entire progress mankind is hurrying toward a single thing: death. At the back of every progress of ours stands death. This is the most certain end of human progress. And as progress ends in death, is it not ridiculous to name it progress? It is more reasonable to call a regress, an ominous regress, as it drags all things into non-existence, into non-being, into nothingness. If we do not want to beguile the little consciousness we still have in our hearts, then we should begin to know and feel that there is no real progress without the victory over death, without providing immortality to the human person, without securing eternal life. In other words: for man and mankind no progress exists without the God-Man Christ, the only Victor of death. Because progress is only this, which triumphs over death and secures immortality to the human person. All, which is not victorious over death and does not secure immortality to the human being is a regress, a fatal regress, which dooms man to death wherein there is no resurrection. The God-Man Christ is the only Victor of death, whereby He is the only Founder and Creator of the only genuine progress, the theanthropic progress; and man and all things human—too human, in fact—are in fact a regress. The dilemma is all too clear: man or the God-Man, death or immortality? ...

Dear friend, if at least once in your life you have asked yourself in all earnestness: what is the meaning of my life, which so unremittingly is hurrying to the grave, progressing towards death—you could find the answer to your question only in the Risen Lord Jesus. If, on the other hand, you have extended your problem with regard to the entire mankind, and in sleepless nights and noisy days you have seriously asked yourself—what is the purpose of the existence of mankind and what is in fact human progress—from all the facts you could draw only one conclusion, that progress is all that leads one toward Christ and the resurrection, because it provides man and mankind with immortality; regress is all that alienates one from Christ and the resurrection, because it pushes both man and mankind toward death and non-existence. The aspiration toward Christ is the vital force of progress, because through this force one vanquishes death and mortality, that is: sin and evil, and secures for oneself immortality and eternal life.

The only meaning of human existence in the watermill of death is the personal immortality of every human being. Without this, why should we need

progress and improvement, why should we need philosophy and culture, why should we need good and evil, why should we need both God and this world? To feel yourself immortal even while you are still living in this body, is a bliss, which one can find and secure only through the God-Man Christ. Developing the sense of immortality and its transformation into a consciousness of immortality is the mission of the [true] Christian in this life. I think that the Saviour's Gospel is nothing else, but a practical guide about how man—a mortal being—can become immortal. By practising the Evangelic virtues, a man conquers all mortality in himself. And the more he lives according to the Gospel [commandments], the more he ousts death and mortality from himself and grows in immortality and eternal existence. To feel in yourself the Lord Jesus is the same as feeling yourself immortal. This feeling of being immortal rises from feeling God, because God is the Fountain of immortality and of eternal life.

“What is immortality?” asks the great Christian philosopher St. Isaac the Syrian and replies thus: “Immortality is a sense of God.” To feel God means to feel you are immortal. God and immortality are two correlative notions, two correlative facts. One is impossible without the other. To feel God in yourself constantly, in every thought, in every feeling, in every action of yours: this is immortality. To acquire this sense of God means to secure your immortality and eternal life. Therefore, the sense of personal human immortality springs only from the faith in God and from the sense of God.

The theanthropic progress consists in developing and perfecting in man this sense of personal human immortality, because it develops to the maximum degree their sense of God. A person with faith in Christ lives with the sense and consciousness that every human being is immortal and eternal, and on the strength of this cannot be the subject of any exploitation and tyranny. The sense of immortality comes from the sense of God, and the sense of God does not tolerate sin, but expels it from man, because sin produces death. If the sense of God is alive in man, with it lives also the sense of immortality, which indefatigably combats all that brings to man death: and that is sin, every sin and every evil.

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Friends, closely inquire into the fundamental principles of the European humanistic progress, into its metaphysics. Can't you see that humanistic culture systematically blunts in man his sense of immortality, until it becomes entirely

blunted and the man of European culture starts to claim with perfect confidence: I am body and body alone. And this means: I am mortal and mortal entirely. Thus, humanistic Europe became obsessed with the motto: man is a mortal being. This is the formula of the humanist, this is the essence of his progress. Unconsciously in the beginning, then systematically, consciously and deliberately, through science, philosophy and culture, in the [mind of the] European man was injected the consciousness that man is mortal, entirely and without remainder. This consciousness gradually formed the conviction, which declares: death is a necessity. Death—a necessity! Is there a greater horror, insult or mockery: the greatest enemy of man being his necessity?! Tell me, is there any logic in this at all, at least an infant's or an insect's logic? Has not European man, drowning and being ground in the watermill of death, lost even the last shadow of reason and started raving?... The humanistic man is devastated, terribly devastated, because both the consciousness and the sense of personal immortality in him have been expelled from him. And without this is man really a man? The European man is phenomenally limited and minimised, reduced to fractions and fragments, since all sense of infinity and eternity has been expelled from him. But how can a man exist without infinity? And if yes, has such existence any meaning at all? Is not man, devoid of this sense of infinity, merely a dead thing among things and an ephemeral animal among animals. Allow me the following paradoxical comparison: I assert that some animals are closer to eternity and immortality in their desires than the man of the European humanistic progress. Shrivelled, stunted, reduced to matter, degenerate, the man of humanism is entirely right in announcing, through the mouths of his wise men that man originates from the ape. Once made equal to animals in his origin, why should he not be equalled to them in morality as well? An animal by his appurtenance and a beast in nature of his existence, he also belongs to animals in morality. Oftener an oftener in modern jurisprudence transgression and crime are considered a social inevitability and a natural necessity. If there is nothing immortal and eternal in man, then all ethics are, in the last analysis, reduced to the whims of urge and appetite. And in his ethics the humanistic man has identified himself with his "ancestors": the apes and the beasts, and his life became governed by the principle: *homo homini lupus* ("Man is a wolf to his fellow-man".)

And it could not be otherwise, since a morality higher than that of the beasts can be based only upon the sense of human immortality. It there be no

immortality or eternal life neither in man nor around man, then to a beast-man the morality of beasts is entirely natural and logical; then “let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die” (1 Corinthians, 15:32.)

Friends, relativism in the philosophy of the humanistic man of Europe inevitably was to result in ethical relativism as well; and relativism is the father of anarchism and nihilism. Hence, in the last analysis, the entire practical ethics of the humanistic man is nothing else, but anarchy and nihilism, because anarchy and nihilism are the inevitable, final, apocalyptic phase of Europe’s humanistic progress. The ideological anarchism and nihilism, the corruption of ideas had to make itself manifest in the practical anarchism and nihilism, in a practical disintegration of the European humanistic mankind and its progress. Are we not witnesses of this progress, which is devastating the European continent? The results of European progress will always be anarchism and nihilism.

Friends, stupid is the European man—abysmally stupid,—if he can believe in progress, in the meaning of life and can work on it, without believing in God and the immortality of the soul. Why do I need this progress, if it dooms me to death? Why do I need all things, all constellations, all cultures, when death is lurking within them and finally it swallows me? Where there is death, there undoubtedly exists no progress. If there is, it is an accursed progress toward the watermill of death. Therefore it has to be destroyed completely and without trace.

This anguish of the European humanistic progress was felt and expressed artistically in the tragedy “Rossum’s Universal Robots” by the eminent Czechoslovakian writer Karel Čapek. The following dialogue took place between his heroes Alquist and Helena:

Alquist: Does Nana have a prayer book?

Helena: A big fat one.

Alquist: And are there prayers in it for various occurrences in life? Against storms? Against illness?

Helena: Against temptation, against floods...

Alquist: But not against progress, I suppose?

Helena: I think not.

Alquist: What a pity.

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Friends, against the humanistic man and his progress is pitted Christ's man with his Theanthropic progress. The basic principle of the Theanthropic progress is: man is a true man only through God, only through the God-Man; in other words: man is a true man only through immortality, that is by conquering everything mortal and all mortality, by winning victory over death. By vanquishing in himself sin and evil, the Orthodox Christian overcomes death and mortality in his consciousness and senses, and unites himself with the only Immortal One — with the God-Man Christ. The Orthodox Christian, having united himself with the immortal God-Man, is already immortal, even in this world he becomes immortal: his mind already thinks with the thoughts of Christ — thoughts immortal and eternal, and his heart already senses inside itself the life of Christ — a life immortal and eternal...

As though I can read in your eyes the question: how can this be accomplished in this accursed watermill of death? Here is how: through faith in the Risen Lord Jesus. If a man believes with all his heart and sincerity in the Risen God-Man, in his soul instantaneously arises the sense of immortality, of resurrection, a feeling that death is vanquished, and along with it are vanquished both sin and evil. This sense of personal immortality inspires and urges the Christian towards Evangelic exploits and he joyfully keeps Christ's commandments and with exhilaration travels along the life path from non-existence toward all-existence and from death to immortality. By uniting with Christ, a man feels himself immortal and infinite with his whole being. In this way, the tragic principle of the humanistic progress — "Death is a necessity" — is replaced by the joyful principle of the Theanthropic progress — Immortality is a necessity.

The Theanthropic progress has its Theanthropic morality: the entire human life has its guidance and power in the God-Man. Only this is good, which is of Christ's; outside this there is no real good. Immortality is the chief characteristic of Christ's good. Therefore, immortality is indispensable for the morality of the Christian man as a feeling, as consciousness, as deed, as practice. To feel Christ the Lord as the Soul of your soul, as the Life of our life — this is again human immortality, because through it is secured the endlessness and infinity of thoughts, feelings and life. For a genuine Christian immortality is both natural and and logical, and so is its endlessness. Immortality is the thing that makes possible and provides the endless moral perfection, the infinite moral progress toward God, Who is the Source of all endlessness, all infinity and all perfection. For this reason the categoric imperative of the Theanthropic progress — "Be ye

therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” — is perfectly natural, logical and justifiable.

The Christian man walks along the way of Divine perfection, vanquishing, with the help of the Evangelic virtues, the sin and evil inside himself and in the world. He always aspires from good to better, from small to greater, from greater to greatest good. He never stops at that, because stagnation means spiritual death. Through every pure thought, through every holy feeling, through every good wish and kind word, man advances towards his resurrection, towards immortality, towards eternal life.

By vanquishing sin and death, the Christian man in this life crosses three main stages of Christian evolutionism: birth in Christ, transformation in Christ and resurrection in Christ. This means to vanquish death. It means, that if you have believed with your soul in the Risen God-Man, then you have already vanquished death yourself, because He has said: “He that believeth in Me ... hath everlasting life... and ... is passed from death unto life.”

When a man believes in the Risen God-Man, he begins to become a human, because he is set free from sin and death and acquires the sense of immortality. Sin is a disease which dulls the sense of immortality and man can reach the living and true God, either with his feeling or with his thought. Such a man is crippled, he is half a man. Christ has vanquished sin and death through His resurrection, in order to raise man for immortal and eternal life, to quicken and to renew his weak and dulled feeling of immortality, so that he may feel God and eternal life as the meaning of human life both on the earth and on heaven.

Actually, the Church is a divine workshop in which the human sense and consciousness of personal immortality and infinity is being continually rejuvenated, renewed and fortified. Does not prayer make the soul infinite by uniting her to God? Does not love immortalise the soul, uplifting it to God? Do not charity, goodness, humility and righteousness make man immortal by translating him into the Kingdom of Christ's Truth? Let us not fall into self-deception: through each Evangelic virtue man defeats death inside himself, little by little, until he completely destroys it in the end and secures himself immortality and eternal life.

In the Theanthropic progress man is endlessly advancing through Christ as the Divine Way by means of the Divine Truth to the eternal and immortal life. And this was all granted to humankind by the God-Man Christ through His Resurrection. All the truth in all worlds, the meaning of all things created, the en-

tire happiness of all creatures are given to mankind through the Resurrection of Christ the God-Man. That is why Christ's Resurrection is the most fateful event in the history of the world, on it depends the intransient and divine value not only of every individual human, but of all men altogether.

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Friends, here I have presented to you a general outline of the Orthodox Christian philosophy of progress. What is progress? The overcoming of death and the victory over death, that is, overcoming evil and sin, victory over evil and sin and, therewith, securing immortality to every human soul and to the soul of mankind as a whole. In other words, progress means to acquire Christ the Lord, to live with Him, in Him and for Him, and in this way to defeat sin and death inside ourselves and in our fellow-man. The Theanthropic progress is realised by practising the Theanthropic Evangelic virtues, because through them one overcomes death and the soul is immortalised, the thoughts are immortalised, the feelings are immortalised. In the person of the Saints we see the realised Theanthropic progress. Through Christ-yearning exploits the have transformed themselves from mortal into immortal, from transient into intransient, from unsactified into holy persons. For them, the wondrous Lord Jesus was everything in all things: everything in the soul, in the heart, in life, in the people, in the state. Without Christ life and the heart and the soul and the people and the state are nothing but death, from which there is no resurrection. Sanctifying and enlightening themselves through life in Christ, the Saints are building a genuine progress through their victory over death, over evil, over sin, over darkness. That is why there is no death neither for their personality, nor for their acts, but in all that belongs to them, a Divine immortality and eternity have been infused. Vanquishing, through the Evangelic exploits, all things sinful and mortal in themselves, the Saints attained immortality and eternal life and became guides and teachers on the path leading from death to life. The "culture-bearers" of Europe are incessantly offering us, the Orthodox, their humanistic progress, which systematically destroys in man and in the peoples the sense of immortality, equating the human being to the mortal insects and beasts. But, in our Saints, we have infallible and dauntless leaders toward Theanthropic progress; they transform our soul into immortal and eternal, through their unceasing prayers they invisibly lead her through the noisy watermill of

death and usher her into the Kingdom of Christ's immortality and eternity, where all perfections and all joys dwell together. Only guided by the Saints in our battle against sin and death can we constantly travel toward the victory — from the victory over sin toward victory over death; only in this way, in this man-eating watermill of death, can we secure for ourselves immortality in both this world and the world to come.