

The Dystopic Eschatology of N. F. Fyodorov and the Modern Futurological Techno-Worship under the Light of Orthodox Theology

By Georgios D. Panagopoulos*

«Ὑμεῖς δὲ μὴ ἐνεχυράζετε τὰς βουλὰς κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν,
ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπειληθῆναι
οὐδ' ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου διατηθῆναι»
[*Ιουδιθ* 8, 16]

“Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God;
for God is not like a human being, to be threatened,
or like a mere mortal, to be won over by pleading”
[*Judith* 8, 16]

Proemium

In the nightmarishly shocking book *Tales from Colima*, the convicted forced laborer Varlam Salamov refers to some prisoners he had met on one of his transports. As he notes, they were followers of Nikolai Fyodorov¹. But who was this almost forgotten figure of Russian thought, whose followers were persecuted as dangerous by the Stalinist superstate? Nikolai F. Fyodorov (1828-1903) was born in the village of Klyuchi in the Tambov region of the Russian Empire, as the illegitimate son of Prince Pavel I. Gagarin. The surname by which he became known comes from his godfather. Young Nikolai would study for a few years in the law

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1. V. Salamov, *Ιστορίες από την Κολιμά*, transl. Eleni Bakopoulou, Agra Publications, Athens 2022.

department of the Richelieu High School in Odessa, and between 1854 and 1868 he would teach History and Geography in various schools, passing through seven different cities. In 1868, he would finally settle in Moscow, where he would soon afterwards take up a post as librarian at the famous Rumyantsev Museum, which lasted 25 years. He retired having received a meagre pension, to work in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Empire.

Fyodorov was humble and shy; although he developed a peculiar *Weltanschauung*, he never published a single page about it. He lived with ascetic frugality, refusing any increase in his meagre income, while he was financially supporting his friends. He became known only to a narrow circle of his disciples and followers, through whom he would influence Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and, above all, Vladimir Solovyov, the most exuberant spirit of the Russian intelligentsia in the second half of the 19th century². Indeed, the latter, spurred on by the impulsiveness characteristic of his personality, will even write to Fyodorov to express his unreserved admiration and declare that he considers him to be his “teacher and spiritual father” (учитель и духовный отец)³.

Three years after Fyodorov’s death, in 1906, two of his most devoted followers, V. A. Kozhevnikov and N. P. Peterson, published a first volume of his writings under the title: *Philosophy of the Common Cause*⁴; the second

2. According to Fr. B. Florofsky, the author’s influence on V. Solovyov is particularly noticeable in the last decade of the 19th century; as for Dostoevsky, elements of Fyodorov’s thought are clearly visible in *The Brothers Karamazov*: Флорофский В. Георгий, *Пути русского Богословия (Paths of the Russian Theology)*, Moscow 2009, pp. 408, 416.

3. Василий Зеньковсуий (V. Zen’kovskii), *Христианская философия (Christian Philosophy)*, Moscow 2010, pp. 730-732. In this comprehensive presentation of the History of Russian Thought, Vasilii Vasil’evich Zen’kovskii, an acclaimed researcher of Russian philosophy, presents in interesting detail aspects from Fyodorov’s life, but especially from his philosophical thought. The interested reader can also learn more about Fyodorov’s thought from the following references by Николай О. Лосский (N. O. Lossky), *История русской философии (History of the Russian Philosophy)*, pp. 85-91; S. A. Levitzky, *Russisches Denken. Gestaltungen und Strömungen*, vol. 1: *Von den Anfängen bis Vladimir Solovev*, German transl. D. Kessler, Peter Lang, Frankfurt / M. et al. 1984, pp. 185-187; J. M. Edie, J. P. Scanlan, Mary Barbara Zeldin, G. L. Kline, *Russian Philosophy*, vol. 3: *Pre-Revolutionary Philosophy and Theology. Philosophers in Exile. Marxiststs and Communists*, Quadrangle Books, Chicago 1965, pp. 11-15.

4. *Философия общего дела*, Верни (Alma Ata).

volume was published in 1913. A third volume, which was planned, could not be published because of the tragic events of the First World War and the ensuing Russian Revolution. Part of the extracts from the third volume were included in Fyodorov's Collected Works, published in Moscow in 1982.

A Critical Outline of Fyodorov's Teachings

According to A. Walicki⁵, Fyodorov's philosophical teaching represents an original combination of heterogeneous elements: Christian eschatology and ethics, rural primitivism (exemplified by the idealization of the Russian village, following the example of the Slavophiles), Russian messianism, as well as a harsh critique of Western capitalism are strangely combined with an almost mystical faith in science and the humanity's technological potential in a synthesis manifestly imbued with the Promethean spirit of collective action. This collective activism is being put at the service of a utopian fantasy, a "common cause" (общее дело)⁶.

Humanity is called upon to respond to this "common cause" by focusing all of its energies on the artificial challenge of resurrecting the dead and crushing death. Fyodorov's ideal is therefore not progress, which is categorically and irrevocably condemned, but the victory over death in the resurrection, which is defined in terms of a rather Origenic restoration of everything as the return of the dead (just and unjust) "to the unresentful purity of their lives"⁷.

Therefore, we see a very interesting feature of the Russian philosopher's thought: the modern cult of science is combined with a quasi-archaic

5. A. Walicki, *The Flow of Ideas. Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to the Religious-Philosophical Renaissance*, translated into English from Polish: Jolanda Kozak & Hilda Andrews-Ruciesca, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2015, p. 571 and *A History of Russian Thought. From the Enlightenment to Marxism*, translated into English from Polish: Hilda Andrews-Ruciesca, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA 1979, pp. 386-387.

6. A. Walicki, *op.cit.* Florovski [Флорофский В. Георгий, Пути русского Богословия (*Paths of the Russian Theology*, *op.cit.*)] on the occasion of Fyodorov's "common cause", has spoken of daydreaming, in which dreams always outweigh insight...

7. М. А. Маслин *et al.* (eds.), *История русской философии (History of the Russian Philosophy)*, Moscow 2001, p. 379.

worship of the ancestors. The latter ones must be brought back to life through scientific methods. Nevertheless, naturalistic scientism does not prevent Fyodorov from disapproving of the perpetuation of the human species through biological births. Indeed, this disapproval sometimes borders on misogyny. Thus the “solitary” thinker (according to G. Florovsky) reformulates in a Nietzschean idiom the demand for the replacement of the “will to birth” by the “will to resurrection”, in a world in which the natural sexual relationship will be replaced by paternal and filial love.

Fyodorov also suggests the way to achieving the “common cause”: through science, humanity will dominate nature. At the same time, it is necessary for a social system to be established that will be based on communal-social property, excluding all divisive factors.

However, at the theological level, Promethean utopianism implies a version of collective Pelagianism: for Fyodorov, man was surrendered through original sin to the satanic charm of incorporeal theoretical knowledge, the critical rejection of which is a common thought pattern of the Russian religious intelligentsia. Consequently, knowledge was divorced from practice; it became abstract, immoral, and incapable of transforming the world by giving meaning to human life. However, the fall was not irreversible: Christ redeemed humans from the original sin and made them capable to become again an instrument in the hands of God⁸. This is probably understood by the Russian thinker in a way reminiscent to Pelagius. In this regard, V. Zen’kovskii points out that, for Fyodorov, “after Christ, salvation depends entirely on the people”, and considers that this can be called “Christian naturalism”, i.e. the perception of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as a past event. Fyodorov understands Golgotha as the past, while the saving power is now immanent in the world⁹. For Fyodorov, the Gospel is not only “good tidings”, but, more importantly, a “program for action”. Now, thanks to the wood of the Cross, people can replace the wood of knowledge with the wood of life.

8. “Человечества призвано быть орудием Божиим в деле спасение мира” (Humanity has been called upon to become a weapon in God’s hands for the salvation of the world); Федоров, *Сочинене (Works)*, vol. 2, p. 387.

9. Василий Зеньковский (V. Zen’kovskii), *Христианская философия (Christian Philosophy)*, *op.cit.*, p. 734.

The wood of the Cross unites everyone in the process of transforming knowledge into action¹⁰.

Consequently, the purpose of universal salvation must be undertaken by humanity itself. The Lord has simply made salvation possible; it is now up to humanity to turn into reality what has been given to it as a potentiality. Collective action is required; this will begin in Russia, because in this country, always according to the Russian intellectual, patriarchal morality has been preserved.

Fyodorov calls his moral teaching “supra-moralism”, and he adamantly believes in its profoundly Christian character. He writes:

“Supra-moralism is not simply Christian morality but Christianity in itself; it transforms dogmatics into ethics, dogmas into commandments – an ethics inseparable from knowledge and art, from science and aesthetics”¹¹. The ministry of God becomes an act of redemption, that is, an act of resurrection.

For Fyodorov, resurrection is inherent in the normal rhythms of nature; we do not perceive; we’ve been alienated due to the fact that we are living in the cities. The path of true victory, leading to resurrection, victory over death, poverty and all suffering, is through the regulation of natural processes, of blind power. Thus, the “moralization and rationalization of all the worlds of the universe” will be achieved. What seems to prevail here is the so-called Russian “cosmism”, (космизм), a variant of Prometheism projected on universal dimensions¹².

10. Зеньковский, *op.cit.*, 735.

11. Walicki, *op.cit.*, p. 572.

12. “Cosmism” represents a particularly proper current of the Russian thought. According to the testimony provided by Alexander Leonidovich Chizhevsky (1897-1964), the term must have been first used by the poet Valery Bryusov (1873-1924) to denote the idea that the human race has been called upon to transcend the boundaries of Earth to colonize Space. Today, with this term we understand the individual world-conception (Weltanschauung) consisting in the consciousness of the organic unity of everything within everything, and the constitution of a socio-political action on an interplanetary level, but also beyond the limits of the earthly sphere. Modern historians of Russian thought distinguish two directions, one religious-philosophical, which usually includes Fyodorov, and a positive-scientific one, whose representatives are K. Tsiolkovsky (father of modern rocket technology) and A. L. Chizhevsky. See M. A. Маслин *et al.* (eds.), *История русской философии (History of the Russian Philosophy)*, *op.cit.*, p. 378.

Humanity's duty is to overcome its divisive conflicts. All human beings, whether being believers or not, should join their forces for achieving the ultimate and supreme purpose, the realization of the plan of the Resurrection¹³. This will be achieved through freedom from blind necessity and entry into the realm of "supra-morality" – the transcendent salvation. "Super-morality" requires the coming of age of humanity and asks for paradise, the Kingdom of Heaven, not somewhere beyond but here, in this world.

It is no coincidence that Fr. G. Florovsky, perhaps the one that possesses the most acute and profound knowledge of the Russian religious and spiritual history, assesses Fyodorov's worldview as a mishmash of magical-religious motifs and utilitarianism, totally unrelated to Christianity¹⁴. Vasily Zen'kovskij is milder in his criticisms. He acknowledges the heterogeneity of the structural materials of Fyodorov's thought, but considers its foundations to be Christian.

According to my own opinion, it would be unfair not to recognize in Fyodorov an intense interest or –more correctly– a longing for the redemption of humanity from the tragic legacy of death and all forms of secular evil. In his thought, a genuine and spontaneous humanism is certainly present and discernible. Furthermore, the call for the resurrection of all the forefathers, although expressed in terms of restitution of everything that recall Origen, he nevertheless retains echoes of the Judeo-Biblical tradition and bears witness to a deep awareness of the humanity's common destiny and the need for a collective redemption¹⁵, which will transcend not only the human places but also human time.

13. М. А. Маслин *et al.*, *op.cit.*

14. Георгий В. Флорофский, *Пути русского Богословия (Paths of the Russian Theology)*, *op.cit.*, pp. 415-416.

15. We should remind here that the concept of an "individual" salvation is alien to the Judeo-Biblical Tradition, which ignores "individual" relationships between man and God. In the Old Testament, the concept of salvation in terms of a collective restitution of God's people is pervasive. The Christian Church received and deepened in the sacramental experience of the sacrament of Christ this genuinely social-communal character of salvation (a fundamental aspect of the Gospel) which, despite the allegations to the contrary, was not weakened but rather confirmed in Orthodox Monasticism. In this respect, the classic study by Henri de Lubac remains always useful: H. de Lubac, *Catholicism. Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*, translated from French into English by L. C. Sheppard – Sister Elizabeth Englund, Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., Kent 1950.

Apart from that, however, Fyodorov's philosophy represents an incongruous combination of elements from the history of Russian and German philosophy: agrarian primitivism and Russian messianism refer to the Slavophiles¹⁶; the critique of abstract rationalist knowledge and the Western social model is a commonplace for almost all Russian intellectuals¹⁷; his eschatology revolving around the resurrection, which must be achieved through a universal collective effort on the basis of scientific achievements and aimed at the moral transformation of the universe, is a genuine manifestation of the Russian "cosmism", while it equally embodies a Christian or Christianizing variant of Nietzschean voluntarism.

Fyodorov's "Cosmism" and Postmodern Utopia

This rather crude and obviously utopian teaching would be of interest to historians of ideas as a *sui generis* exotic flower in the vast herbarium of the history of philosophy. Paradoxically, however, Fyodorov's Promethean eschatology and Pelagian activism is becoming relevant in our postmodern era, an era of Promethean furor, which tends to transform utopia into dystopia. By this we mean that his teachings suddenly seem to presage the most dystopian views of modern "transhumanism" and the so-called "metaverse".

What do we call "metaverse" and "transhumanism"? The term metaverse refers to a digital network of virtual worlds, in which each and every one of us will be able to enter without leaving our real world and interact with other people and digital entities. The "metaverse" is a

16. For Russian messianism, both secular and religious, see, among others, V. Murvar, "Messianism in Russia: Religious and Re-revolutionary", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 10, 4 (1971), pp. 277-338. As far as the Slavophiles are concerned, the reference study is A. Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy – History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought*, transl. Hilda Andres-Rusiecka, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1975.

17. J. M. Edie *et al.*, *Russian Philosophy*, vol. 3, *op.cit.*, p. 13. For the anti-western trends in the Russian thought, see V. Zen'kovskij, *Russland und Europa. Die russische Kritik der europäischen Kultur*, transl. D. Kegler, Academia, Sankt Augustin 2012.

permanent “world”, to which our own material reality is complementary up to a point of contraction. Does anyone realize that the new “metaverse” differs from the “virtual reality” known until now in that it affects the materiality of our lives to a much greater degree. It is an extension, augmentation and enhancement of the material reality in cyberspace¹⁸.

What do we mean, then, by the term *transhumanism*? One could answer by using a dictum by the well-known filmmaker Woody Allen: “Some people want to achieve immortality through their works or their descendants”, adding: “Personally, I prefer to achieve immortality without dying”.

As Aubrey de Grey (an obsessive gerontologist and one of the best savants on the subject) claims, the first human beings who could live forever have already been born. More specifically, the researcher claims that aging is nothing more than a disease that could very well be cured. He makes no secret of the fact that he does not like the term *immortality*. Instead, he believes that we should focus on overcoming the disease of aging. In fact, de Grey calls for accelerating biotechnological progress, so that we can extend life expectancy to such a level, that it would overtake the ageing period¹⁹. “Immortality” ante portas?

Of course, de Grey “is not the only one who envisions the postponement of the inevitable. The representatives of transhumanism tend to agree on one thing: The next stage of human evolution will be based on the ‘coupling’ of man and machine. This means either the implantation of chips in the body with the aim of upgrading it, or the downloading of thoughts, dreams and memories, as suggested by, among others, Elon Musk²⁰.

18. The term “metaverse” appeared for the first time in Stephenson Neal’s novel, *Snow Crash*. With this, the writer wanted to describe a parallel universe in which the people are interacting with each other, but also with digitally constructed entities, having the shape of avatars, Cf. Maria Kokkidou, «Τί είναι τὸ Metaverse καὶ γιατί ὅλοι μιλοῦν γι’ αὐτὸ τελευταῖα;», <https://www.2045.gr/thematologia/ypiresies/ti-einai-to-metaverse/> [14.9.2023].

19. G. Goranitis, «Θὰ γεννήσει ἡ τεχνολογία τὸν πρῶτο ἀθάνατο ἄνθρωπο;», https://www.2045.gr/thematologia/texnologa_kai_athanatos_anthropos/ [14.9.2023].

20. G. Goranitis, op.cit.

It seems that the postmodern “prophets” and “apostles” confirm the most tenebrous “oracle” of every irreverent or atheistic humanist; to paraphrase the English writer Arthur Clarke, our role on this planet, is not to worship God, but to constantly argue about His position...²¹.

It is worth noting that postmodern views tend to verify at least one aspect of Fyodorov’s “prophetic” vision, that of terrestrial immortality through technique. But his demand for resurrection to be provoked by science also seems to find its answer in our days in the digital recall of the predeceased.

Convergences and Divergences

We certainly do not ignore the differences between the two models. We would even argue that the things they separate them are more than those which complements them.

a) In Fyodorov, science and technique are overemphasized but not glorified, as in modern technolatri or technotheism. Moreover, Fyodorov emphatically contrasts science with progress; he assents to the first to the degree that it can be put at the service of the humanity’s “common cause”, while he outrightly rejects the second, i.e. progress. On the contrary, in the postmodern paradigm, technology is the most concrete proof and at the same time the driving force of perpetual progress.

b) In order for his utopian vision to be achieved, Fyodorov presupposes the unity and fraternity of humanity, a moral-social characteristic that made his worldview attractive in the eyes of communist intellectuals like Mayakovsky and Gorky, but not Stalin. Yet this very dimension is totally absent in modern technolatri. Its “prophets” are animated by the, rather typical for the Western paradigm, rabid desire for an individualistic bliss. This observation is not invalidated even when our contemporary pioneers

21. Arthur Clarke’s phrase in the original is as follows: “It may be that our role on this planet is not to worship God, but to create him”. See the brief but succinct description by Pr. Giulio, “Yet another tribute to Arthur C. Clarke”, <https://turingchurch.net/yet-another-tribute-to-sir-arthur-c-clarke-130b56549226> [14.9.2023].

of the “metaverse” digital reality, such as Zuckerberg, speak of a future that will not be built by one company but by all of us together.

c) Similarly, Fyodorov was not only interested, like modern “transhumanists”, in achieving immortality or even prolonging the life of the living, but in the resurrection of the forefathers, of all generations, with the aim of creating, always with the human effort, a moral and rationalized world. His vision does not limit the unity of humanity to space; it extends it to time. In Fyodorov, in other words, in contrast to the current beliefs reigning within the context of modern dystopian designs, the future is not absolutized but glorified through the recovery of the past. Nevertheless, his demand for the moralization of his “brave new world” should not be confused with the visions of the “metaverse’s” followers for higher forms of existence and social organization.

d) Last but not least: Fyodorov may perceive eschatology through the prism of a Promethean scientism alien to the Christian Tradition, yet there does exist an eschatology, a deistic yet existent eschatological vision: *Deus fecit et abiit et homo a se ipso resurrecturus est*. On the contrary, in the postmodern “transhuman” reflection, eschatology tends to be replaced by an atheistic technocratic futurism, by the vision of a reality enhanced by biotechnology. It is originally understood that what matters is the individuality’s eudaimonic prolongation – at any price; there is no talk at all of liberating man from selfishness through love, which “it is not self-seeking” (*«ἤτις οὐ ζητεῖ τὰ ἑαυτῆς»*)²², and is given by Him “who first loved us” (*«ὁὄστις πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς»*)²³. Such an immortality would perhaps be worse than hell itself.

To briefly summarize: Fyodorov’s model is imbued with the concept of collective and intergenerational solidarity and raised the demand, in the context of the common mission of humanity, for the justification of history through the scientific achievement of the resurrection of all and the emergence of the world in its moral and spiritual entirety. All these are absent from the postmodern technocracy.

However, both paradigms are meeting on the ground of a manifest technocratic anthropocentrism (collective and transgenerational in

22. 1 Cor. 13, 5.

23. 1 John. 4, 18-19.

Fyodorov, eudaimonic and individualistic in “transhumanism”). In both cases, anthropocentrism is justified through scientific technique. Technology emerges as the History’s ultimate criterion.

Since eschatology is ultimately a form of definitive “theodicy”, “anthropodicy” and “historiodicy”, it would be not an exaggeration for us to claim that Fyodorov’s moral-scientific “cosmism” foreshadows some eschatological proposals of the “transhuman condition”: In both cases, the resolution of the drama of human history and the opening towards the eschatological end is expected from a total overbidding of the science and technology’s power (despite the abhorrence that the Russian utopian was nurturing for progress).

A Comment Based on Orthodox Theology

The question arises: How could an appropriate commentary be articulated here from the perspective of the Orthodox Tradition? By starting from the affirmation and moving towards the differentiation, which constitutes the “salt of the earth” («ἄλας τῆς γῆς»)²⁴: The Orthodox Patristic Tradition will agree with Fyodorov that the eschatological vision of the Church cannot be a Platonic-type immortality of the soul but the Resurrection of the dead in the image of the new Adam, the “firstborn from the dead” («πρωτοτόκου ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν»)²⁵. Orthodox theology could even accept de Gray’s his crucial observation, that old age is a disease. I recall here the prophetic speech of Fr. J. Romanides, according to whom not only old age but also death itself is a disease, which has crept into human nature because of the mind’s darkening and the loss of divine life-giving glory²⁶.

In any case, nothing could be more alien to the orthodox Christian testimony than the underlying anthropotheism of Fyodorov’s eschatology

24. *Matthew* 5, 13.

25. *Col.* 1, 18.

26. F. Io. Romanides, «Ἡ θρησκεία εἶναι νευροβιολογικὴ ἀσθένεια, ἡ δὲ Ὀρθοδοξία ἡ θεραπεία τῆς», *Ὀρθοδοξία, Ἑλληνισμός, πορεία στὴν 3ῆ χιλιετηρίδα*, Koutloumousiou Holy Monastery Publications, Mount Athos 1996, pp. 67-87.

or the overt one of the contemporary futuristic techno-theism... If for the Judeo-Biblical and patristic Tradition «ἡμῶν ... τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι αὐτὸ σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ» (= “our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”)²⁷, for the “intra-human” narrative we’re expecting the “transhuman”, who will have been liberated from his imperfect body – the ultimate achievement and at the same time self-negation of modern “anthropotheism”. Ultimately, behind the endo-cosmic eschatological and futuristic visions lies not only the denial of God but also the rejection of man. The modern man is ready to reject himself in the name of a future, supposedly liberating, transhuman condition – an unprecedented mixture of archaic Gnosticism and modern rationalism... In the extremely narrow context of a proposition, we think that it is appropriate to underline the following two points in the light of the Orthodox theological testimony:

*a. The Resurrection as Expression
of God’s Eschatological Fidelity in His Testament*

It goes without saying that the resurrection as the core of Christian hope concerns the whole person (soul and body), even the whole creation. However, we should not overlook that the doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead according to the Orthodox theological view must be understood not on an anthropological but on a Christological-ecclesiological background. The restoration and renovation of man and creation that is taking place in the Last Days through the Resurrection is not dictated by some anthropological specific or archetypal quality; rather, it is the expression of the Lord Almighty’s fidelity to His creation, already echoed by the protological «καλῶς λίαν» from Genesis and confirmed by the theology of God’s covenant with His people, as expressed par excellence by Prophet Ezekiel²⁸.

27. Phil. 3, 20

28. Ez. 37, 1-14: «Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐπ’ ἐμὲ χεῖρ Κυρίου, καὶ ἐξήγαγέ με ἐν πνεύματι Κύριος

Under this prism, man will be resurrected –always according to the orthodox theological assessment– not because the anthropological structure “body-soul” is deterministically pushing in this direction (a version of, we might say, “anthropic principle”), but because he has been created in the

καὶ ἔθηκέ με ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ πεδίου, καὶ τοῦτο ἦν μεστὸν ὀστέων ἀνθρωπίνων... ξηρὰ σφόδρα. Καὶ εἶπε πρὸς με· υἱὲ ἀνθρώπου, εἰ ζήσεται τὰ ὀστέα ταῦτα; καὶ εἶπα· Κύριε Κύριε, σὺ ἐπίστη ταῦτα. Καὶ εἶπε πρὸς με· προφήτευσον ἐπὶ τὰ ὀστέα ταῦτα καὶ ἐρεῖς αὐτοῖς· τὰ ὀστέα τὰ ξηρά, ἀκούσατε λόγον Κυρίου. Τάδε λέγει Κύριος τοῖς ὀστέοις τούτοις· ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ φέρω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς πνεῦμα ζωῆς καὶ δώσω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς νεῦρα καὶ ἀνάξω ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς σάρκας, καὶ ἐκτενώ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς δέρμα καὶ δώσω πνεῦμά μου εἰς ὑμᾶς, καὶ ζήσεσθε καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι Κύριος... τάδε λέγει Κύριος· ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἀνοίγω τὰ μνήματα ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνάξω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν μνημάτων ὑμῶν καὶ εἰσάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν γῆν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι Κύριος ἐν τῷ ἀνοίξαι με τοὺς τάφους ὑμῶν τοῦ ἀναγαγεῖν με ἐκ τῶν τάφων τὸν λαόν μου» (= The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2 He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3 He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” 4 Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5 This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath[a] enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’” 7 So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’” 10 So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. 11 Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’ 12 Therefore prophecy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13 Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14 I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord’”); cf. *Is.* 26, 19; 55, 3; *Amos* 9, 11; *Joel* 4, 14-20; *Zech.* 14, 6-9. See also G. Florovski, «Ἡ κοιλάδα τῆς σκιάς τοῦ θανάτου “τὰ ὀστέα τὰ ξηρά”», in: *Δημιουργία καὶ ἀπολύτρωση*, transl. P. K. Pallis (G. Florovski, Ἔργα 3), P. Pournaras Publications, Thessaloniki 1983, pp. 11-19; cf. W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation. A Theology of Old Testament Covenants*, Thomas Nesvill Publishers, Nashvill et al. 1984, pp. 186-188; and the comments by Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ. A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing C. Grand Rapids, Michigan 1996, pp. 2-14.

image of the incarnate Word of God. And it is precisely in the communion with the body of the Word where is revealed the undeferrable counsel of God and the mystery of «τὸ κεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου»²⁹, the universe of created reality becoming one church. The resurrection is not “caused”³⁰, –nor is it substituted– by eudaimonic extensions of life³¹; rather, it is a promise of the Lord Almighty revealed through the Risen Christ as an expression of God’s undeferrable faithfulness to His covenant. It is therefore no coincidence that the belief in the resurrection, free of any mythological connotations, is revealed as an expectation and a manifestation of faith in the person of Jesus Christ, constituting already from the earliest Christianity one of its most fundamental “doctrines”³².

b. Theanthropocentric and Prophetic Character

Orthodox eschatology is neither a secular state (as in Russian cosmism or papal foundationalism) nor a perpetual “futurism”, as in postmodern transhumanism; again, it is not unilaterally transcendental (as it happens with the various versions of the philosophical underestimation or rejection of history); it is God-centered and prophetic. Beyond the limits of the path via salvation and illumination «διὰ πασῶν τῶν δυνάμεων καὶ ἡλικιῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ» (St. Gregory the Theologian) it is transformed into a religious ideology. This means that the Last Days are already felt from

29. *Ephes.* 1, 4.

30. *Judith* 8, 16: «Ἵμεῖς δὲ μὴ ἐνεχυράζετε τὰς βουλὰς Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν, ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ Θεὸς ἀπειληθῆναι, οὐδὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου διατηθῆναι.» (= “Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like a human being, to be threatened, or like a mere mortal, to be won over by pleading”).

31. «Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ εἰρήνη καὶ χαρὰ ἐν Πνεύματι Ἁγίῳ» (*Rom.* 14, 17). Cf. also the idiomelon from the Fifth Sunday of the Great Fast, inspired by the Apostle Paul, which every version of religious or secular bliss and verifies the godlike ethos of selflessness in Christ: «Οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ Βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ βρῶσις καὶ πόσις ἀλλὰ δικαιοσύνη καὶ ἄσκησις, σὺν ἀγιασμῶ ὅθεν οὐδὲ πλοῦσοι εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ, ἀλλ’ ὅσοι τοὺς θησαυροὺς αὐτῶν ἐν χερσὶ πενήτων ἀποτίθενται. Ταῦτα καὶ Δαυῖδ ὁ Προφήτης διδάσκει λέγων: Δίκαιος ἀνὴρ ὁ ἐλεῶν ὄλην τὴν ἡμέραν, ὁ κατατρυφῶν τοῦ Κυρίου καὶ τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶν ὃς οὐ μὴ προσκόψη, ταῦτα δὲ πάντα, πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν γέγραπται ὅπως νηστεύοντες, χρηστότητα ποιήσωμεν, καὶ δώη ἡμῖν Κύριος ἀντὶ τῶν ἐπιγείων τὰ ἐπουράνια».

32. *1 Cor.* 15, 1-28. Cf. Jo. Gnllka, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Herder, Freiburg – Basel – Wien 1999, p. 48.

the present within the mystical body of Christ by those who, through the healing treatment of neipsis, delivered by the prophets and apostles, have «ἐν αἰσθήσει καὶ πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ» Christ dwelling in their hearts through the Holy Spirit («Τούτου χάριν κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου πρὸς τὸν πατέρα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ... ἵνα δώῃ ὑμῖν κατὰ τὸν πλοῦτον τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι διὰ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον, κατοικῆσαι τὸν Χριστὸν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν»)³³.

As the late Fr. John S. Romanides has argued, “With the therapeutic treatment of purification, enlightenment and glorification, selfish love is replaced by selfless love. This is the true healing of society. This healing is being achieved where the energy of the uncreated Cross brings the perfection of love together with the transformation of corrupted passions into uncorrupted ones”, beginning with Holy Baptism³⁴. Any eschatology that bypasses the Cross of selfless love promises the perpetuation of the human tragedy under the tricking cloak of eudaimonism.

At the end of the day, the Last Days is the kingdom of God «ἐληλυθυῖα ἐν δυνάμει»; it is expected but also felt through exercise and martyrdom in the Holy Sacraments³⁵. For the Orthodox patristic tradition, the Kingdom of God is the deity’s natural comeliness and magnificence, the uncreated “power and glory of God, the temple in which God and the human nature of Christ dwell”³⁶; thus, the Kingdom of God also transcends the Church in the sense that it is not identical with it. The patristic tradition ignores Roman Catholic universalism, leaving to the Lord of glory the first and last word on history and the human condition.

In this light, the authentic ecclesiastical consciousness, while already considering the patterns and figures of this world under the prism of their transcendence in Christ, at the same time knows that this world

33. *Ephes.* 3, 14-17.

34. Metrop. of Nafpaktos and Hagios Vlassios Hierotheos, π. Ἰωάννης Ρωμανίδης. Ἐνας κορυφαῖος δογματικὸς θεολόγος τῆς Ὀρθόδοξης Καθολικῆς Ἐκκλησίας, *The Birth of the Theotokos Holy Monastery (Pelagias)*, Levadeia 2012, p. 365.

35. For an up-to-date critical presentation of the “eschatological” models in contemporary academic theology, both orthodox and heterodox, see G. Patronos, *Ἡ ἐσχατολογία τοῦ 20οῦ αἰῶνα*, Church of Greece Radio Station Publications, Athens 2020.

36. Metrop. of Nafpaktos and Hagios Vlassios Hierotheos, *op.cit.*, p. 282.

has not yet completely passed, respects its given differences, and awaits them to be finally abolished by the coming Lord in glory. Intra-worldly eschatology is unilaterally affirmative; orthodox prophetic eschatology synthesizes affirmation and decision: it touches the «ἰδοὺ καινὰ ποιῶ πάντα»³⁷, but it nevertheless confesses that «οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα»³⁸, therefore «ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῆ, ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν, τότε καὶ ὑμεῖς σὺν αὐτῷ φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ»³⁹; it affirms the pledge of the Spirit, which already renovates the creature, but at the same time he experiences through testimony the earnest expectation of the creation for its liberation into the freedom of the children of God. It thus prophetically witnesses, in anticipation of the Holy Spirit's eschatological freedom which is experienced by the «ἐν θεωρίᾳ διαβεβηκότας», the transformation of the world; at the same time, however, it continues to respect through its testimony the categories embedded in collective life (ethnicity, traditions, social and professional hierarchies, etc.), because it ultimately recognizes that God alone has the first and last word on history and its end.

This proposition does not in any way constitute an apology for the established order; it only reminds of the “discrimination” gift. It does not discourage the sociocentric commitment to the prevalence of law; it simply indicates its limits⁴⁰. After all, it acts as a breakwater against any form of anthropotheistic eschatology, which, instead of justifying history, as promised, it ultimately undermines it.

37. *Revel.* 21, 5.

38. *1 John* 3, 2.

39. *Col.* 3, 4.

40. G. D. Panagopoulos, *Κοινωνία καὶ Ἠσυχασμός*, Ath. Altizis Publications, Thessaloniki 2021, *passim*.