



<https://doi.org/10.48417/technolang.2023.02.02>

Research article, translation

Man and Machine (the Problem of Sociology and the Metaphysics of Technology)

Nikolai Berdyaev

New Translation by Walker Trimble (✉)

E-Quadrat Science and Education, Bruchsaler Straße 4, 10715 Berlin, Germany

Abstract

In 1933, the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev (1874–1948) published the essay ‘*Chelovek i Mashina*’ (‘Man and Machine’) in a Parisian journal for Russian exiles. While the article has seen numerous translations, so far an accurate and annotated version is lacking in English. While ‘Man and Machine’ is an important historical *raisonné* of thought about technology in its time, it is also one of the first critiques of the deep importance of technology for Soviet totalitarianism. Berdyaev believes that modern civilisation puts tools in the place of their users and that, if we do not reassess our aims in life, the advances and comforts provided by technology will lead to our destruction as human beings. Berdyaev contrasts this situation with the eschatological views of Nikolai Fedorov and the ‘cosmists’ who neither rejected technology nor fell into submission before it. As a ‘Christian existentialist’, Berdyaev holds that the highest aims of humanity are those in which we realise our place as bearers of the image of God. Technology used to this end can lead us toward our self-realisation.

Keywords: Nikolai Berdyaev; Nikolai Fedorov; Technological epoch; Organism and organisation; Russian cosmism; Technology as culture; Stalinism; Eschatology; Spirit

Citation: Berdyaev, N. (2023). Man and Machine (the Problem of Sociology and the Metaphysics of Technology) (W. Trimble, Trans.). *Technology and Language*, 4(2), 7-26.
<https://doi.org/10.48417/technolang.2023.02.02>



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<https://doi.org/10.48417/technolang.2023.02.02>

Научная статья, перевод

Человек и машина (проблема социологии и метафизики техники)

Николай Александрович Бердяев

Новый перевод Уолкера Тримбла (✉)

Э-Квадрат Наука и образование, Брухзалер Штрассе 4, 10715 Берлин, Германия

Аннотация

В 1933 году русский философ Николай Бердяев (1874–1948) опубликовал очерк “Человек и машина” в парижском журнале для русских эмигрантов. Хотя существует множество переводов на разные языки, до сих пор отсутствует точная и аннотированная версия статьи на английском языке. В то время как “Человек и машина” является важным историческим обоснованием размышлений о технологиях своего времени, это также одна из первых критических статей о глубокой важности технологии для советского тоталитаризма. Бердяев считает, что современная цивилизация ставит инструменты на место их пользователей и что, если мы не пересмотрим наши цели в жизни, то достижения и удобства, предоставляемые технологией, приведут к нашей гибели как человеческих существ. Бердяев противопоставляет этому положению эсхатологические взгляды Николая Федорова и “космистов”, которые не отвергли технику, но и не подчинились ей. Как “христианский экзистенциалист”, Бердяев считает, что высшими целями человечества являются те, в которых мы осознаем свое место как носителей образа Божия. Технологии, используемые для этой цели, могут привести нас к самореализации.

Ключевые слова: Николай Бердяев; Николай Федоров; Технологическая эпоха; Организм и организация; Русский космизм; Технология как культура; Сталинизм; Эсхатология; Дух

Citation: Berdyayev, N. A. Man and Machine (the Problem of Sociology and the Metaphysics of Technology) (W. Trimble, Trans.) // Technology and Language. 2023. № 4(2). 7-26.
<https://doi.org/10.48417/technolang.2023.02.02>



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Man and Machine (the Problem of Sociology and the Metaphysics of Technology)¹

I.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the question of technology concerns the fate of man and the fate of his culture.² In the age of those of little faith, in the age when not only faith in the old religion but also that of 19th century humanism is in a parlous state, the only compelling faith for modern civilised man is the faith in technology, in its power and in the endless course of its development. Technology is the last love of humankind and, swayed by the object of our love, we are ready to exchange this object for our own image.³ Everything that happens to the world comes to nourish this new human faith. We longed for a miracle of faith once it had seemed to us that miracles were no more. And now technology produces real miracles. The problem of technology is very disturbing for Christian consciousness in particular, and it is a problem that Christians have yet to comprehend. Christians maintain two attitudes towards technology and both are inadequate. Most consider technology to be religiously neutral and impartial. Technology is the business of engineers. It brings improvements to life, which Christians also enjoy. [4] Technology multiplies the benefits of life. But this does not particularly affect Christian conscience or consciousness, nor does it pose any particular spiritual problem. A minority of Christians experiences technology in an apocalyptic sense. They are terrified of its increasing power over human life, they are ready to see in it the triumph of the spirit of the antichrist, the beast emerging from the abyss. Abuse of the apocalyptic is especially characteristic of Russian Orthodoxy. Anything we do not like, anything that violates the familiar, is quickly announced as the triumph of the antichrist and a sign that the end is at hand. This is no more than an idle resolution. It is based on the affect of fear.

¹ Original Russian publication in *Put'*: *Organ russkoi religioznoi mysli* — a journal for Russian texts that was published in Paris under the French name *VOIE, Revue religieuse russe* (Berdyayev, 1933). The Russian original can be found online, also a version in modern Russian: https://runivers.ru/upload/iblock/31b/Put_N38__05.1933.pdf and <http://www.odinblago.ru/path/38/1>. The pagination of the original publication is here provided in brackets. Original footnotes are designated [N.B.], translator's footnotes signed [W.T.]. This new translation is accompanied by an extensive introduction and commentary (Trimble, 2023). — For the original English translation Berdyayev's first name was rendered 'Nicholas' rather than 'Nikolai' (Berdyayev, 1934/2012; 1972).

² '*Chelovek*' — While the title preserves the period English 'man', in fact '*chelovek*' is not marked for gender and generally means 'a/the human'. It is difficult to preserve good English style and always render the term as 'human' or 'humankind', so 'person', 'mankind', 'man', and 'we' are all taken as variants. Moreover, the text is generally known in the English-speaking world by the title of its first translation into English: 'Man and Machine' (Berdyayev, 1934/2012). It is not clear that the discussion of Berdyayev's text would benefit from updating it anachronistically. [W.T.]

³ '*Tekhnika*' — Russian does not distinguish 'technique' from 'technology'. We render most instances as 'technology' with a few exceptions, such as in the next sentence.

'*Obraz*' — the image in the sense of 'image and likeness', 'form', 'example', 'structure'. While modern readers might be surprised by the irruption of 'Christian consciousness', with '*obraz*' Berdyayev has already prepared his readers for the Orthodox Christian understanding of the creation of man in God's image fulfilled and restored in the incarnation and expressed in 'holy images' as icons. [W.T.]



And neutrality is also lazy, it simply fails to recognise the problem.

Technology can be understood in both a broader and narrower sense. Τέχνη has the meaning of both industry and art. Τεχνάζειν means to fabricate, to create with art. We are talking not only about the technology of economics, industry, the military, transport and the comforts of life, but also about the technique of thought, versification, painting, dance, law, even about the technique of spiritual life, the mystical path. So, for example, yoga is a kind of spiritual technique. Technology everywhere teaches you to achieve the greatest result with the least expenditure of effort. And this is especially the case in the technology of the technical, economic age. Yet, unlike the master technicians of earlier cultures, the achievements of quantity have overrun those of quality. Spengler, in his new little book *Der Mensch und die Technik*,⁴ defines technology not as a weapon but as the battle itself. Yet, technology certainly has always been a means, a tool, and not a goal in and of itself. There can be no [5] technological goals in life. There can be only technological means while the aims of life must lie in some other arena, in the field of the spirit. The means of life very often replace the aims, they take up so much space in human life that the aims of life can resolutely and utterly disappear from one's consciousness. And in our technological era, this happens on a grand scale. Of course, technology for a scientist making scientific discoveries, for an engineer making inventions, can become life's principal content and purpose. In this case, technology, as knowledge and invention, acquires a spiritual significance and relates to the spiritual life. But the substitution of the goals of life by technical means can mean a diminution and extinction of the spirit, and this is what is now the case. Technical tools by their nature are heterogeneous both to the one who uses them and to the one for which it is used, heterogeneous to man, spirit, and meaning. This is related to the fateful role the domination of technology plays in human life. One of the definitions of the human, as *homo faber*, the tool-maker, so common in the histories of civilisations, already testifies to the substitution of the aims of life with the means of living. Man is undoubtedly an engineer, but he invented the art of engineering for purposes beyond his limits. And, as such, this replacement is a repetition of the Marxist materialist understanding of history. While it is indisputable that the economy is a necessary condition of life; without economics, a person's mental and spiritual life is impossible, nor is there any possibility for ideology. But the purpose and meaning of human life does not lie at all in this necessary basis of life. What is most powerful in urgency and necessity, [6] is not at all what has the greatest worth. What is most worthy is not the strongest thing that can stand above all else in its pomp and hierarchical dominion. One could say that the most powerful thing in our world is raw matter, but it is also the least worthy. In our sinful world, God seems to be worthless, He was crucified by the world, but it is He who is the supreme worth.⁵ Technology holds such sway in our world not because it is supremely worthy.

We face a basic paradox: culture is impossible without technology, the very emergence of culture is connected with it, yet the final victory of technology within

⁴ Berdyaev is referring to Oswald Spengler's *Der Mensch und die Technik. Beitrag zu einer Philosophie des Lebens* [Humanity and Technology. Contribution to a Philosophy of Life] (Spengler, 1931) [W.T.]

⁵ And that the highest values are those that exert the least influence is well argued by Nicolai Hartmann in his *Ethics*. [N.B., see Hartmann, 1926]



culture, the entry into the technical era, leads culture towards its destruction. There are always two elements in culture – a technical and a natural-organic element. And the final victory of the technical element over the natural-organic element means the rebirth of culture into something else that itself has no resemblance to culture. Romanticism is a reaction of the natural-organic element of culture against its technical element. Since Romanticism revolts against classical consciousness, it revolts against the predominance of the technical form over nature. The return to nature is an eternal motive in cultural history. In it one can sense the death of culture at the hands of technology, the death of human nature in its wholeness. The desire for wholeness, for organicity is also a characteristic feature of Romanticism. The thirst for a return to nature is the memory of a lost paradise, the thirst for a return to it. And always the way to paradise is blocked.

French [7] Thomists like to make a distinction between *agir* (πρακτόν) and *faire* (ποιητής).^{6,7} This is an old scholastic distinction. *Agir* means the free exercise of human strength, *faire* means the creation of products, fabrication. In the first case, the centre of gravity lies in the person, in the creator, in the second case in the product. The technical era requires a person to fabricate products and, moreover, in the greatest quantity with the least expenditure of effort. The human becomes an instrument of production. The thing is set above the person.

It is possible to establish three stages in the history of humankind: the natural-organic, the cultural in the proper sense, and the technical-mechanical. These stages correspond to the differing attitudes of the spirit to nature: first the immersion of spirit in nature, then the separation of spirit from nature and the formation of a special sphere of spirituality, then active mastery of the spirit of nature, domination over it. These stages, of course, must not only be understood chronologically, they are fundamentally different modes. And the man of culture still lived in the natural world. This world was not created by man but was taken as created by God. Humanity was connected with the earth, with plants and animals. A huge role was played by Telluric mysticism, the mysticism of the earth. It is well known that plant and animal religious cults were of great importance, such cultic elements were then transformed and taken into Christianity. According to Christian beliefs, man is dust and to dust he shall return. Culture in its fluorescence was still surrounded [8] by nature, it was enthralled by gardens and animals. Flowers, shady parks and lawns, rivers and lakes, well-bred dogs and horses, birds are all part of culture. People of culture, no matter how far they went from natural life, still gazed at the sky, at the stars, at the fleeting clouds. The contemplation of the beauties of nature is itself mostly a product of culture. Culture, the state, everyday life, were comprehended organically by analogy with living organisms. The prosperity of cultures and states seemed also to be a biological process. Culture was full of symbols, earthly forms were written in the heavens, these were signs from the other world given in this world. Technology as such is alien to symbolism, it is realistic, it reflects nothing, it creates a new reality, everything is here

⁶ See, for example, Jacques Maritain's book *Art et scolastique*. [N.B., see Maritain, 1920]

⁷ 'Delat' – Berdyaev notes the distinction between *agir* and *faire* in French because the Russian verb 'delat' does not distinguish 'do' and 'make'. [W.T.]



and now. It tears the person away from nature and from the worlds of others.

What matters most for our subject is the distinction between an organism and an organisation.⁸ The organism is born from natural cosmic life, and to itself gives birth. Birth is a mark of the organism. An organisation cannot be born and cannot give birth. It is made by human activity, it creates, though its creativity is not the highest form of creativity. The organism is not an aggregate, it is not made up of parts, it is whole and is born whole, the whole precedes its parts and it is present in each part.⁹ The body grows, develops. The mechanism created by the organisational process is made up of parts that cannot grow and develop, in it the whole is not present in its parts and does not precede its parts. The organism exhibits [9] an intentionality which is immanent to it, invested in it by the Creator or nature, determined by the dominance of the whole over the part.¹⁰ The organisation has a completely different kind of intentionality, invested in it by the organiser from the outside. The mechanism is composed with the subordination of the specific aims of its construction, but it is not born with a purpose inherent to it. The clock acts with clear intention, but it has no intentionality beyond that of the person who made or wound it. While the organised mechanism in its intentionality, in its directedness, depends on the organiser, it yet has its own inertia that can act upon, and even enslave, the organiser. There have been organised bodies in history, similar to the life of organisms. Then the patriarchal system and the natural economy seemed organic and even eternal in their organicity. The organic system was usually represented as created not by man, but either by nature itself, or by the Creator of the world. For a long time there was a belief in the existence of an eternal objective order of nature, with which human life must be coordinated and subordinated. The natural was given a kind of normative character. What agreed with nature seemed both good and just. For the ancient Greek and for mediaeval man there was an unchanging cosmos, a hierarchical system, an eternal *ordo*. Such an order existed both for Aristotle and for St Thomas Aquinas. The earth and the sky formed an unchanging hierarchical system. The very understanding of the immutable order of nature was connected with an objective theological principle. And now technology in its form, which has been triumphant since the end of the 18th century, has destroyed this belief in the eternal order [10] of nature and has destroyed it in a much deeper sense than evolutionism has. Evolutionism recognises change, but these changes occur at the same stage of natural reality. Evolutionism arose principally from the biological sciences. Development itself was understood as an organic process. But we do not live in the age of biological sciences, we live in the age of physical sciences, in the age of Einstein, and not the age of Darwin. The physical sciences are not as conducive as the biological sciences to an organic understanding of the life of nature. Biology adopted a mechanistic explanation in the second half of the 19th century, but it favoured organic

⁸ ‘*Organizatsiya*’ – The contrast ‘organism/organisation’ is more evident in Russian than in English. That ‘-isation’ as a suffix is built upon ‘-ism’ suggests that the latter is causally dependent upon the former. This is equivalent to the born/made distinction. [W.T.]

⁹ See Driesch, *La philosophie de l’organisme*. [N.B., see Driesch 1921]

¹⁰ ‘*Tselesoobraznost*’ – On the basis of the context, this has been translated as ‘intentionality’. The Russian word (lit. ‘goal-directedness’) does not convey the particular semantic or epistemological sense usually given to that term. [W.T.]



understanding in other fields, such as sociology. Naturalism, as it developed in the second half of the last century, recognised development in nature, but this development took place along nature's eternal order. Therefore naturalism especially valued the principle of the regularity of natural processes, something much less valued by modern science. Modern technology sets man before a new nature that is not at all a product of evolution, but a product of the ingenuity and creative activity of the person themselves. It is not an organic process, but an organisational process. This is the meaning of the entire technological era. The domination of technology and the machine is primarily a transition from organic life to organised life, from vegetativeness to constructiveness. From the point of view of organic life, technology means a dis-incarnation, a rupture in the organic bodies of history, a rupture of flesh and spirit.¹¹ Technology sets forth a new stage of reality, and this reality is the creation of man, the result [11] of the breakthrough of the spirit into nature and the introduction of reason into spontaneous processes. Technology destroys old bodies and creates new ones that are not at all like organic bodies. It builds organised bodies.

And the tragedy is that the creation revolts against its creator and no longer obeys him. The mystery of the fall of humanity in original sin is in the rebellion of the creature against the Creator. It repeats itself throughout the history of humankind. The Promethean spirit of man is unable to master the technology he has created, to cope with the emergence of uninhibited, unprecedented energies. We see all this in the processes of rationalisation in the technical era, when the person is replaced by the machine. Technology replaces the organic-irrational with the organised-rational. But, at the same time, it generates new irrational consequences in social life. The rationalisation of industry has resulted in unemployment, the greatest disaster of our time. Human labour is being replaced by a machine. This is a valid contest that could, for its part, annihilate human poverty and slavery. But the machine does not obey at all what a person demands of it, it has its own laws to dictate. Humanity says to its machines: 'I need you to make my life easier, to make me stronger.' The machine answers humanity: 'But I do not need you, everything can be done without you. You can disappear.' Taylor's system is an extreme form of rationalised labour, and it turns the person into an improved machine. The machine wants a person to accept its image and likeness. Yet humankind is made in the image and likeness of God and cannot become the image and likeness of a machine without ceasing itself to exist. Here we are faced with the limits of the transition from the organic-irrational to the organised-rational. [12] The organisation associated with technology presumes an organising subject; i.e. an organism which itself cannot be turned into a machine. But the organisation tends to turn the organiser himself from an organism into a machine. The very spirit that created the machine and technology can neither be completely mechanised nor technologised. It must always have its own irrational beginning. But technology wants to master the spirit and to rationalise it, turn it into an automaton, enslave it. And this is the titanic struggle of man and the nature he is technologising. At first, man was dependent on nature, and this dependence was a

¹¹ 'Razvoploschenie' – The more natural translation would be 'disembodiment', but Berdyaev is clearly referring to the 'image' of man in the incarnate Christ which technology *undoes*. [W.T.]



vegetative and animal dependence. But here begins a new dependence of man on nature, on a new nature, a technical-mechanical dependence. This is the whole agony of the problem. The human organism, its psychophysical organism, was formed in another world and adapted to the old sense of nature. It was a vegetal-animal adaptation. But man has not yet adapted to the new reality that is revealed through technology and the machine. He does not know whether he will be able to breathe in the new electric and radioactive atmosphere, in a new cold, metallic reality devoid of animal warmth. We do not yet know how destructive the atmosphere created by our own technical discoveries and inventions is for us. Some doctors say that this atmosphere is dangerous and destructive. And the innovations of man in the instruments of destruction greatly exceed those of medicine to make him whole. It turned out that it is easier to invent poisonous gases to cut down millions than to invent a cure for cancer [13] or tuberculosis. The human body turns out to be defenceless before our inventions. The discoveries related to organic life turn out to be much more difficult than those related to the inorganic world, where we enter a world of miracles.

II.

The domination of technology and machines opens up a new stage of reality, one defying scientific classification, a reality that is not at all identical with the reality of the mechanical and physio-chemical. This new reality is visible only from history, from civilisation, and not from nature. This new reality develops in the cosmic process later than the other stages, after complex social development, at the heights of civilisation, though it is also a host for mechanical, physical and chemical forces. Art has also created a new reality not found in nature. We can say that the characters and images of artistic creativity represent a special kind of reality. Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust, Leonardo's Mona Lisa or Beethoven's symphonies are new realities not known in nature. They have their own existence, their own destiny. They affect people's lives, generating very complex consequences. People of culture exist among these realities. But the reality that art reveals has a symbolic character, it reflects the ideological world. Technology, on the other hand, creates a reality devoid of any symbolism, here reality is unmediated. This also applies to art, because in technology [14] art itself is reborn. Consider the cinema which is, little by little, taking the place of the old theatre. The impact of cinema is enormous. But it is reliant on technical discoveries, amazing discoveries in the field of light and sound, that would have been miraculous to people of previous ages. Cinema has taken possession of expanses that the theatre was completely powerless to master: oceans, deserts, mountains, just as it takes possession of time. Through talking cinema and the wireless¹² the actor and singer are not addressing an intimate audience where a small number of people have come together in a particular place, but perform before the vast masses of all humankind, in all parts of the world, all countries and peoples. This is the most powerful tool that could unite humanity, while it could also be used for the most wicked and vulgar purposes. Cinema testifies to the power of realisation inherent in

¹² 'Wireless' – orig. lit. 'TSF' – *télégraphie sans fil*, radio. [W.T.]



modern technology. It has brought forth a new reality. But this reality that technology has made possible amounts to a radical change in our relations to space and time, it is the creation of the spirit, the human mind, the will, the application of human intentionality. This is a superphysical reality, not spiritual and not psychical, but namely superphysical. There is a sphere wherein operates the superphysical, as well as a sphere wherein operates the superpsychic.

Technology has a cosmogonic meaning, through it a new cosmos is created. In his recent book, *Reflexions sur la science des machines*, Lafitte says that, along with inorganic and organic bodies, there are also organised bodies – the kingdom of machines, [15] a peculiar kingdom.¹³ This is a new category of being. The machine is actually neither an inorganic nor an organic body. The appearance of these new bodies is connected with the difference between the organic and the organised. It would be utterly false to put the machine in the inorganic world on the grounds that it derives its reality from the mechanico-physico-chemical elements of inorganic bodies. There are no machines in inorganic nature, they exist only in the world of society. These organised bodies do not appear before the human, as inorganic bodies do, but after the human and through the human. Humankind managed to call something to life, to bring forth a new reality. This is an indicator of humanity's terrible power. It points to our creative and sovereign vocation in the world. But it is also an indicator of our weakness, our penchant for slavery. The machine has enormous not only sociological, but also cosmological significance. It poses with extraordinary acuteness the problem of the fate of man in society and in the cosmos. This is the problem of the relationship of man to nature, personality to society, spirit to matter, the irrational to the rational. Though many books have been written on the subject, it is extraordinary that a philosophy of technology and machines has not yet been created. While much ground has already been laid for the creation of such a philosophy, the most important element is lacking – the machine and technology have yet to be conceived as a spiritual problem, as an element of human destiny. The machine is viewed only from the outside, as a social projection. But from the inside it is a question of the philosophy of human existence (*Existenzphilosophie*). Can we exist only in the old cosmos, the physical and organic, which was conceived as an eternal order, or can we [16] exist in a new, different, still unknown cosmos? Christianity, bound as it is to the fate of humanity, has been set before a new world, and it has yet to come to terms with this new position. This state of affairs also determines the construction of the philosophy of technology as it must be resolved in spiritual practice before it can be resolved as philosophical conceptualisation.¹⁴ This is always the case, whether or not philosophical conceptualisation is capable of recognising it.¹⁵

¹³ Berdyaev here refers to Jacques Lafitte whose 'mechanology' also influenced Gilbert Simondon (Lafitte, 1932, see Sandrone, Vaccari, Lawler, 2022). [W.T.]

¹⁴ '...v dukhovnom opyte... filosofskom poznanii' – The opposition of 'spiritual experience' and 'philosophical understanding' is less precise in English than in Russian. Earlier Berdyaev used the term 'opyt' in the sense of scientific experimentation, here some of the concreteness of that sense passes over to the phrase 'spiritual opyt'. 'Poznanie' also means 'apperception', and 'perception'. [W.T.]

¹⁵ Friedrich Dessauer's book *Philosophie der Technik* is an experiment in the philosophy of technology. [N.B., see Dessauer, 1927]



What does the technological epoch and the emergence of a new cosmos mean for the fate of humanity? Is this the materialisation and death of the spirit and spirituality, or may it have some other significance? The rupture of the spirit with the old organic life, the mechanisation of life, gives the impression of the end of spirituality in the world. Never has materialism been so strong. Technology tears away the fusion of the spirit with historical bodies. That fusion once seemed to be an eternal order and, for many, the spirit disappears once separated from the flesh. The technological era indeed brings with it a great deal of death. Soviet technological constructs make an especially macabre impression. But their originality is not in the technology itself – they have accomplished nothing new. America has gone much further and the Soviets are unlikely to catch up with it. What is original in Soviet communist Russia is the spiritual phenomenon that is exposed in its relations to technology. Here is something truly unprecedented, a phenomenon of a new spiritual type. It is this, its eschatology, which makes such a macabre impression, Christian eschatology in inversion.

Technology and economics as such can be [17] neutral, but once the spirit adopts an attitude toward both technology and economics, the question inevitably becomes a spiritual one. Sometimes it seems that we live in an era of the final predominance of technology over wisdom in the ancient, noble sense of the word. The technologisation of the spirit, the technologisation of the mind, can easily seem like the death of both spirit and mind. Christian eschatology connects the transformation of all things with the action of the Spirit of God. The eschatology of technology awaits a final possession of all things, a final domination over them with the help of its instrumentation. Therefore, the answer to the question of the meaning of the technological era from a Christian and spiritual point of view may seem quite clear and simple. But actually, the problem is much more complex. Technology is also dual in its meaning, like everything in this world. Technology takes a person off the ground, it strikes at any mysticism of the earth, the mysticism of the maternal principle, which played such a role in the life of human societies. The actualism and titanism of technology is directly opposed to any passive, vegetal-animal gestation, gestation in the womb of mother earth, *Magna Mater*, it destroys the comfort and warmth of organic life that has clung to the earth. The meaning of the technical era is primarily that it ends the Telluric period in the history of humankind, when man was defined by the earth not only in the physical sense, but also in the metaphysical sense of the word. This is the religious meaning of technology. Technology gives a person a sense of the earth's planetary nature, a completely different sense of the Earth than that which was characteristic of man in previous eras. A person feels completely different when they sense the depth, [18] the sanctity, the mysticism of the earth; when one feels the earth as a planet flying into infinite space, among infinite worlds, when one is able to separate from the earth, to fly through the air, to be transported to the stratosphere. This change of consciousness theoretically took place already at the beginning of modern times, when the Copernican system replaced the Ptolemaic system, when the earth ceased to be the centre of the cosmos, when the infinity of worlds was revealed. Pascal was yet horrified by this change whilst it was merely theoretical, he was frightened by the silence of infinite spaces and worlds. The cosmos, the cosmos of antiquity and the Middle Ages, the cosmos of St Thomas Aquinas and Dante has



disappeared. Then humanity found some compensation – a fulcrum upon which it could shift the centre of personal gravity into the ego, into the subject. The idealistic philosophy of modern times is a compensation for the loss of the cosmos, in which man occupied his hierarchical place, in which he felt surrounded by higher forces. But technology has a terrible power of realisation, and it gives the stark sense that the ancient cosmos with earth at the centre is no longer. It changes, revolutionises the whole being of modern man. And the result in relation to the person is contradictory and ambivalent. Humankind was frightened when the infinity of spaces and worlds was revealed, it felt lost and humiliated, no longer the centre of the universe but an insignificant, infinitesimal speck. The power of technology continues the work of revealing the infinity of spaces and worlds into which the earth is thrown, but it also gives a person a sense of its own power, the possibility of mastering the infinite world, in it there is also a sense of human titanism. Humankind is being made for the first time, finally, [19] king and lord of the earth, and perhaps all things. The attitude to space and time is in radical change. Previously, humanity clung to Mother Earth in order not to be crushed under space and time. Now it is beginning to master space and time, it is not afraid to cleave itself from the earth, to fly as far as possible into space. This, of course, is a sign of our maturity, we no longer seem to need the care and protection of our mother. Thus the struggle is at once much more severe while technology makes life more convenient. There are always these two sides to technology: on one hand, it brings with it convenience, comfort and ease, and on the other hand, it demands greater severity and grim fortitude.

The old cultures took possession of only a small space in small masses. Such was the perfection of past culture: in ancient Greece, in Italy during the Renaissance, in 17th century France, in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century. This is the aristocratic principle of culture, the principle of cultivating qualities. But the old culture is powerless in front of enormous *quantities*, it cannot adopt the appropriate means of selection. Technology acquires for itself huge spaces and huge masses. Everything is done on a global scale, everything extends to the entire human mass in the era of technological domination. This is its sociological significance. The principle of technology is democratic. The technical era is the era of democracy and socialisation, everything becomes collective. In it new collectives are organised which once were occupied by the old cultures of vegetal and organic life. This vegetal life, which had received its religious [20] sanction, fashioned organisation. This then has been made redundant for the human masses, in the modern sense of the word. Order, and even a very stable order, could be maintained without organisation in the modern sense of the word, it was maintained by the organic limits set upon it. Technology, on the other hand, gives the human a sense of terrible power, and it is a product of the will to power and of expansion. This will for expansion, which gave birth to European capitalism, inevitably calls forth the masses to their historical life. Then the old organic order collapses and a new form of organisation, one given by technology, becomes inevitable. Undoubtedly, this new form of mass organisation of life, this technologisation of life, destroys the beauty of the old culture, the old way of life. The mass technical organisation of life destroys all individualisation, all that is peculiar and original, all becomes a faceless mass devoid of form. In this age



production is massive and nameless. Not only is the outer, conformable¹⁶ side of life devoid of individuality, but so is the inner emotional life. And, as such, the romantic reaction to technology is to be expected. The resistance of figures such as John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy is to be expected, a resistance founded on both morals and aesthetics. But any utter rejection of technology is impotent and inconsistent. They can only approximate a defence of more primitive and backward forms of technology and not its utter rejection. Everyone reconciled themselves to the steam engine, to railways, but they were also opposed in their own time. You can refuse to travel by aeroplane, but you will use railways and cars, you're not fond of the Métro, but you willingly ride the streetcar, you are fond of silent films, but you cannot bear the talkies. [21] We are very inclined to idealise the cultural epochs that came before us and that did not know the automobile, and this is very understandable in our disfigured and stultifying lives. But we forget that the old, non-technical life was associated with the terrible exploitation of people and animals, with slavery and enslavement, and that the machine can be an instrument of liberation from this exploitation and slavery. Pushkin's poem 'The Village' beautifully depicted this duality of the past. He describes the extraordinary charm of the Russian village and the landowner's life in it, but suddenly recalls that it is based on enslavement and on a hideous falsehood. In the problem of idealising the past we find the paradox of time. The past that we like so much and was so beguiling never actually took place. This past has been drawn through our creative imagination, through purification, and it gets released from the evil and ugliness that had infected it. We love only the past attached to eternity. For the past never was in the past, the past is only an integral part of our present. In the very past there was another present and in it is evil and ugliness. This means that the eternal is the only thing you can love. Thus there is no return to the past and there is no desiring it. We can only want to return to the eternal past, but this eternal has been singled out by us in some transformative creative act, freed from its darkness. It is impossible to think of a return to living off the land and to the patriarchal system, to the exclusive predominance of agriculture and the workshop in economic life, as Ruskin wished. This is not possible for us, we must live out [22] our destiny. The new human masses, pushed into the arena of history, demand new forms of organisation, new tools. But what we call the 'technological age' is no more eternal than any other. The epoch of the unheard-of power of technology over the human soul will end; but it will end not with the denial of technology, but with technology's submission to the spirit. Humankind cannot remain chained to the earth and depend on it for everything, but neither can he decisively break away from it and go into space. Some kind of connection with the land will remain, and agriculture will remain, without which a person cannot exist. To break into paradise, into the garden of Eden is not given to man until the end and transformation of the world, the whole cosmos. But there will always be a memory of paradise and longing for paradise, there will always be a trace of paradise in natural life, in gardens and flowers, in art. The inner connection of the human with the soul of nature is the other side of its relationship to it. The final displacement of it by technical actualism disfigures not only nature, but also man. The future of humanity cannot be thought holistically, it

¹⁶ 'Plasticheskii'. [W.T.]



must be complex. There will be reactions against technology and machines, efforts to return to primordial nature, but technology and the machine will never be destroyed while humankind walks the earth.

III.

What is the main danger that the machine poses to man, a danger that can already be observed? I fear it is a fundamental danger to the spirit and spiritual life. The machine and technology shall inflict terrible defeats upon the human spiritual, [23] and especially emotional, life, on human sentiments. The mental, spiritual, and emotional element is fading in modern civilisation.¹⁷ So we can say that, while the old culture was dangerous for the human body, either neglecting, pampering, or coddling it, mechano-technical civilisation is dangerous primarily for the soul. The heart can scarcely bear the touch of cold metal, it cannot live in a metal casing. These procedures that lead to the destruction of the heart, as the core of the soul, are characteristic for our age. Among the most prominent French writers of our age, for example, Proust or Gide, it is no longer possible to find the heart as an integral organ of a person's mental life. Everything has degraded into an intellectual element and into sensory impressions. Keyserling is absolutely right when he speaks of the destruction of the emotional order in modern technological civilisation, and when he calls for a restoration of this order.¹⁸ Technology deals terrible blows to humanism, to the humanistic worldview, to the humanistic ideal of man and culture. The machine is inherently anti-humanistic. The technological conception of science is completely opposed to the humanistic understanding of science, and is in conflict with the humanistic understanding of the perfection of human nature. This is at once the same question of the attitude to the soul. Though it may at first seem surprising, technology is less dangerous for the spirit. In fact, we can say that we live in the era of technology and the spirit, and not in the era of the mental and the soul. The religious sense of modern technology is precisely that it puts everything under the sign of the spiritual, and therefore can lead to the spiritualisation of things. It requires that the spiritual be exerted upon things. [24]

Technology ceases to be neutral, it has not been neutral for any length of time, nor is it indifferent to the spirit, nor to questions of the spirit. And, in the end, it is impossible for anything to be truly neutral, something can seem neutral only up to a certain point and only superficially. Technology has a deadly effect on the soul, while at the same time prompting a strong reaction from the spirit. While the soul, left to itself, turned out to be weak and defenceless before the increasing power of technology, the spirit may be yet strong enough. Technology makes man into a cosmiurge. Compared with the tools that modern technology puts into the hands of a person, his former tools seem like toys. This

¹⁷ *Dushevno-emotional'naya stikhiya* – Previous references to the 'spiritual' have used the term '*dukhovniy*', here he speaks of the 'soul' (*dushá*). Here this is roughly equivalent to the German '*Geist*'; e.g., '*dushevnyaya bolezn*' – '*die Geisteskrankheit*'. This contrast between spirit and soul is also important later where *dusá* is then close to *die Seele*, and *dukh* represents the expression of human energy and willful activity. [W.T.]

¹⁸ See his *Meditations Sud-Americaines*. [N.B., see Keyserling, 1932]



is especially evident in the technology of war. The destructive power of former weapons of war was very limited and localised. The old cannons, guns and sabres could not exterminate masses of humanity, destroy large cities, endanger the very existence of culture itself. Meanwhile, new technology has made this possible. And, as in everything, technology puts terrible force into the hands of the person, which can itself become destructive. Soon peaceful scientists will be able to shock not only at an historical, but also at a cosmic level. A small handful of people with the secrets to technology in their hands will find it possible to hold hostage the whole of humankind. This is quite conceivable. Renan had foreseen this possibility. But when our race is given the power with which it can rule the world, and can destroy a significant part of humanity and culture, then everything becomes dependent on the spiritual and moral state of a person, what they will use this power for, what kind of spirit this person has. [25] The question of technology inevitably becomes a spiritual question and, in the end, a religious question. The fate of humanity depends on it. The wonders of technology, always dual in nature, require an unprecedented spiritual tension, immeasurably greater than those of previous cultural eras. Human spirituality cannot be organically vegetative. And we face the demand of a new heroism, both internal and external. The human heroism once associated with war is coming to an end, in the last war it was practically non-existent. But technology requires of us a new heroism and we constantly read and hear of its manifestations. Such is the heroism of scientists who are forced to leave their offices and laboratories. Flying into the stratosphere or sinking to the bottom of the ocean requires, of course, real heroism. Heroism is required by the brave flights of aeroplanes battling raging storms. Manifestations of human heroism begin to reach out to cosmic spheres. But the strength of the spirit demands, first of all, a technology that does not enslave or destroy us. In a sense, we can say that we are talking about matters of life and death. Sometimes such a terrible utopia comes to the surface. There shall come a time when there will be perfect machines with which man could rule the world, but there will be no humans at their helm. The machines themselves will behave with perfection and achieve maximum results. The last people themselves will turn into machines, but then they will disappear because of the uselessness hinderances of organic respiration and the circulation of the blood. Factories will produce goods with great speed and perfection. Cars and aeroplanes will fly. With the wireless, [26] music and song will ring around the world, the speeches of our forebears will be reproduced. Nature will be conquered by technology. The new reality created by technology will remain in cosmic life. But there will be no man, there will be no organic life. Such ghoulish visions sometimes appear. Their outcome depends on the exertion of the strength of the spirit, whether humanity will escape such a fate. This is where the exclusive power of technologisation and machinisation can lead – to non-existence in technical perfection. We must not give technology full autonomy, allow it complete freedom of action, it must be subordinated to the spirit and spiritual values of life, like everything else. But the human spirit will cope with this grandiose task only if it is not isolated and does not rely only upon itself. It will cope only when it will become united with God. Only then will the image and likeness of God be preserved in the human and, as such, will man be preserved. And this is the difference between Christian eschatology and technological eschatology.



IV.

The power of technology in human life entails a profound change of religiosity. And we should say directly that it is a change for the better. In the technological, machine age, the inherited, habitual, everyday, socially conditioned type of religiosity weakens and becomes more and more belaboured. The religious subject is changing, it feels less connected with traditional forms, with vegetal-organic life. Religious life in the technological and machine age requires a more intense form of spirituality, [27] Christianity becomes more internal and spiritual, more free from social influence. This is an inevitable process. It is very difficult in the modern world to keep the form of religion determined by inherited, ethnic, family, socio-moeitic influences. Religious life becomes more personal, more impassioned and, as such, more spiritually determined. This, of course, does not at all imply a kind of religious individualism, because the very conciliarity and ecclesiasticism of religious consciousness has nothing in common with sociology. But in another respect, the power of technology can have fatal consequences for spiritual and religious life. Technology masters time and radically changes our attitude to time. Technology allows a person to actually master time. But technological actualism subordinates the person and his inner life to time's ever-accelerating progression. In the frenzied speed of modern civilisation, in this flight of time not a single moment remains an end in itself, and not a single moment can be stopped, as if we were actually exiting from time itself. There is no way out of time in the life of a single moment (*Augenblick*) in the sense that Kierkegaard uses the word.¹⁹ Each moment should be replaced as soon as possible by the next, and all moments remain in the flow of time and therefore disappear. It is as if there is nothing inside each moment except striving for the next moment, it is in itself empty. But such a mastery of time through rapidity and speed turns into enslavement under time's flow. This means that technological actualism in its relation to time shatters eternity and makes it more and more difficult for a person to relate to eternity as such. We have no time for eternity. [28] As soon as possible we must move from one moment to the next. This should in no way mean that we should see only the eternal in the past, a past which is always being torn asunder by the future. The past is no more part of eternity than is the future, and both past and future belong together to time. Indeed, in both past and future, and at any time, it is possible to enter into eternity, into a precious, saturated moment. Time obeys speed's machine, but it shall not be overcome or defeated by it. And thus we face a problem: can we hold on to those moments of contemplation, contemplation of eternity, God, truth, and beauty in our present state? The person undoubtedly has an active vocation in the world and, indeed, there is some truth in the principle of actualism. But the human being is also capable of contemplation, and in contemplation there is an element that defines one's ego. There is creativity in contemplation itself, that is, in our relation with God. The formulation of this problem further convinces us that all the diseases of modern civilisation are generated by a discrepancy between the mental organisation of a person inherited from other times and a new, technical, mechanical reality from which there is no escape. The human soul

¹⁹ Berdyaev is here referring to Kierkegaard's (1844/1981) notion that „the fullness of time is the moment as the eternal“ (p. 90). [W.T.]



cannot withstand the speed that modern civilisation demands. This requirement alone is inclined to turn the person into a machine. And this is a painful process. Modern man tries to strengthen himself through sport, and with this combat a form of anthropological regression. And there is no denying the positive significance of sport and its return to the ancient Greek attitude to the body. But sport itself can turn into a means of destroying the person, deformity [29] instead of harmony when not subordinated to the holistic, harmonious idea of the person. Technological civilisation is essentially impersonalistic, it does not know and does not want to know the individual.²⁰ It requires of the human activity, but does not want the person to preserve their individuality. And it is especially difficult for a person to remain an individual in our civilisation. Individuality is the opposite of the machine in everything. First of all, it is unity in diversity and integrity, it assumes its goal from itself, it does not agree to be turned into a part, into a means or an instrument. But technological civilisation, but technologised and mechanised society, each want man to be a part of them, their means and instrument, they assure at all costs that the human dispense with its unity and integrity – they want the person to cease to be an individual. And there will be a terrible struggle between the individual and technological civilisation, the technologised society, the struggle of man and machine. Technology is always ruthless to all that lives and exists. And pity for what lives and exists must limit the power of technology over life.

Machinism, triumphant in capitalist civilisation, distorts first of all the hierarchy of values, and the restoration of the hierarchy of values is a limitation of the power of machinism. This problem cannot be resolved by returning to old mental structures and to the old natural-organic reality.²¹ And, at the same time, the nature of modern technical civilisation, and what it does to humanity is unbearable to Christian, not to mention human, consciousness, [30] the consciousness of human dignity. We stand before the question of saving the very image of humanity. The human is called to continue peacemaking; and his work is like the eighth day of creation, he is called to be the king and lord over the earth. But the work he does, and the work to which he is called, enslaves him and distorts his image. A new person appears, with a new mental structure, with a new image. The old person, the man of the past, took himself for an eternal man. There was the eternal in him, but he was not an eternal man. The past is not eternal. A new person must appear in the world. And the difficult question is not his relation to the old man, but his relation to the eternal man, to the eternal in the human. The image and likeness of God in man is eternal. It is this which gives a person an identity. There is no way that this can be given a statistical understanding. The image and likeness of God in man, as in a natural being, is revealed and confirmed in its dynamics. This is the relentless struggle against the old, old man in the name of the new man. But machinism would like

²⁰ *Lichnost* – For the sake of consistency, and to contrast with the rendering of *‘chelovek’* as person, this is translated here as ‘individual’ and ‘individuality’; however the English term is rather hollow in comparison with the Russian. The term is better understood as ‘person’, ‘personality’ and ‘identity’ in the sense of ‘establishing one’s identity’. Etymologically, the term descends from the noun *‘lik’* (‘face’), the term also used for the faces of icons. [W.T.]

²¹. An interesting book by Cina Lombroso, *La rancon du machinisme*, invests too much faith in the possibility of returning to domestic types of civilisation. [N.B., see Lombroso 1931]



to replace in man the image and likeness of God with the image and likeness of the machine. This is not the creation of a new person, it is the extermination of the person, the disappearance of the person, replacing him with another being, with a different, non-human existence. This is the whole agony of the problem. Humanity created the machine, and it can give him a proud awareness of his dignity and strength. But human pride can turn imperceptibly into human humiliation. A truly new being may appear, but it is no longer a human being. And this is not at all because the person belongs to the old world, and [31] the new world must change the person and replace the person with another type of being. Throughout its historical destiny humanity itself has changed, it has been old and new. But in all times, old and new, the human has touched upon eternity, and it is this that has made us human. The new person finally breaks with eternity and decisively attaches himself to the new world, which he must master and subjugate. Without immediately noticing it itself, this being will cease to be a person. The human becomes dehumanised. The question arises: to be or not to be a person, not an old person who should be overcome, but just a person in oneself. Since the emergence of human self-consciousness, which reached its expression in the Bible and in ancient Greece, this problem has never been raised with such acuteness and depth. European humanism believed in the eternal foundations of human nature. This faith it received from the Greco-Roman world. Christianity believes that humankind is a creation of God and bears His image and likeness, that man is redeemed by the Son of God. Both faiths strengthened the European man, who considered himself a universal man. Now this faith has been shaken. The world is not only de-Christianised, but also dehumanised. This is the whole severity of the question that the monstrous power of technology has set before us.

A remarkable attempt to resolve that question before us belongs to the brilliant Christian thinker Nikolai Fedorov, the author of *Philosophy as a Common Cause*.²² For him, as for Marx and Engels, philosophy is not there to cognise a theoretical world, but to remake it. Philosophy must be a project. Humanity is called to actively master the elemental forces of nature. [32] This has brought us death, regulating and ordering not only the social, but also cosmic life. Nikolai Fedorov was an Orthodox Christian, and the rationale for his ‘common cause’, the cause of victory over death and the return of life to all the dead, was a Christian one. But he also believed in science and technology, he held in them an extraordinary belief. He made no deification of science or technology – because he believed in God and Christ – but science and technology were for him the greatest tools of man in the victory over nature’s elemental, irrational, mortal forces. He held faith in the wonders of technology and called for their perfection. Fedorov’s example is interesting to us because it combined faith in the power of technology with a spirit directly opposite to the one which prevails in the technical era. He hated the machinism of modern civilisation, hated capitalism created by prodigal sons who forgot their fathers. He has a formal resemblance to Marx and communism, but was the complete opposite of them in spirit.²³ Nikolai Fedorov is one of the few figures in the history of Christian

²² Compare previous allusions in this text to „cosmic life“ and Fedorov’s cosmism (Fedorov, 1906-1913). [W.T.]

²³ See Setnitsky’s interesting book *On the Final Ideal*. Setnitsky’s book represents the Fedorovian school of the Soviet period where the religious elements of his worldview have been weakened. [N.B., see



thought, almost the only figure, who has overcome a passive understanding of the apocalypse. The apocalypse is a revelation about the historical destinies of man and the world and about its end, about the final reckoning. But this revelation can neither be understood deterministically nor fatalistically. The end, the last judgement and the eternal damnation of many are not at all predetermined by divine or natural necessity, they are not at all fatal. A human being is free and called to activity, the end depends on the human. Apocalyptic [33] prophecies are conditional. If Christian humanity does not unite for the common cause of mastering the elemental mortal forces, for the victory over death, and for the restoration of universal life, for the regulation of world life, if it does not create a kingdom of Christian spiritualised labour, if it does not overcome the dualism of theoretical and practical reason, mental and physical labour, then Christian truth and Christian brotherhood and love in the fullness of life cannot be realised. If death will not be defeated by the power of Christian love and the power of science and technology, then there will be the kingdom of the antichrist, the end of the world, the last judgement and everything that is described in the apocalypse. But all this is avoidable should we take up the ‘common cause’. Fedorov’s eschatology differs from both the typical Christian eschatology and from the eschatology of modern technology, the religion of machinism. Indeed Russian communism is a stark reminder of the little-appreciated Fedorov. He raised the religious question of human activity and technology in all its acuteness. The power of technology and the machine as connected with capitalism was born in the bowels of the capitalist system, and the machine has been capitalism’s most powerful tool. Communism has entirely adopted this hyper-machinism and technologism from capitalist civilisation and has created a real religion of the machine, which it worships as a totem. Undoubtedly, if technology has created capitalism, then it can also contribute to overcoming capitalism and in creating a different, more just social order. It can become a powerful tool in solving the social issue. But in this case, everything will depend on which spirit wins, what sort of spirit the human will be. Materialistic communism [34] subordinates the problem of man as an integral soul-body being to the social problem. It is not the person that should organise society but society that should organise the person. But, of course, the opposite is true: the human is primary, the human must organise society and the world. And this organisation will depend on what kind of person the human is, what kind of spirit he is. And the human is taken here not only as an individual being, but also as a social being with a social vocation. Only then does a person have an active and creative vocation. Very often in our era, people wounded by machinism say that a machine cripples the human, that the machine is to blame for everything. Such an attitude humiliates us and is beneath our dignity. The machine is not responsible for anything. Man is the maker of machines, the machine is not to blame for anything, and it is unworthy to transfer responsibility from the person itself to the machine. It is not the machine, but the human which is guilty of the terrible power of machinism, it is not the machine that has immobilised the man, but the man who has immobilised himself. The problem must be transferred from without to within. The power of technology and machines over human life is limited by the work of the spirit. The work of man himself

Setnitsky, 1932



depends on the tension within his spirituality. A machine can be a great tool in our hands, in our victory over the power of elemental nature, but for this a person must be a spiritual being, a free spirit. There is a process of dehumanisation in the world, dehumanisation in everything. But the man himself is to blame for this dehumanisation and not the machine. Machinism is only a projection of this dehumanisation. We, for example, see this dehumanisation of science in modern physics, with its [35] extraordinary discoveries. Physics studies invisible light rays and inaudible sound, and this leads beyond the limits of the world of light and sound familiar to man. Einstein also leads away from the spatial world familiar to man. New discoveries in physics have a positive meaning, they are guilty of nothing, they testify to the power of human consciousness. Dehumanisation is a spiritual state, it is the attitude of the spirit towards man and the world. Everything leads us to the religious and philosophical problem of man.

The person can be absorbed by an increasingly unfolding cosmic infinity. Christianity freed man from the power of cosmic infinity that surrounded him in the ancient world, from the power of the spirits and demons of nature. It put him on his feet, strengthened him, made him dependent on God and not on nature. But at the heights of science, heights that have only become attainable at the heights of civilisation and technology, with the independence of man from nature, man himself discovers the hidden secrets of cosmic life and discovers the action of cosmic energies that had once lain dormant in the depths of natural life. This testifies to man's power, but it also puts him in a new, dangerous position in relation to cosmic life. A demonstrated ability of a person to organise disorganises them internally. Christian consciousness also must confront a new problem. The Christian response to the new position of the human in the world presupposes a change in how Christian consciousness understands our vocation in the world. The problem of Christian anthropology is put at the centre. [36] Neither patriotic nor scholastic anthropology, nor humanistic anthropology can satisfy us. From the cognitive side, the problem of philosophical anthropology moves to the centre. Man and machine, man and organism, man and cosmos are all problems of philosophical and religious anthropology. In their historical destiny, a person goes through different stages, and our fate is always tragic. In the beginning, humanity was enslaved to nature, and we began a heroic struggle for our protection, independence and liberation. We fashioned culture, states, national unity, social classes. But we then became slaves to the state, to nationality, and to the classes we created. Now humankind is entering a new period where it wants to master irrational social forces. We create an organised society and advanced technology, we make man an instrument of organising life and the final mastery of nature. Yet we become a slave to organised society and technology, a slave to the machine into which society has been transformed and into which humanity itself is imperceptibly transformed. But the problem of human liberation, the domination of the spirit of nature and society, is ever being posed in newer and newer forms. This problem can be solved only by an awareness that puts humanity above nature and society, that puts the human soul above all the natural and social forces that must obey it. That which freed humankind must be accepted, and that which enslaved humankind must be rejected. However, this truth about humanity, the truth of its dignity and vocation, is embedded within Christianity; though perhaps history has not adequately revealed, and has often distorted



it. The path of the final liberation of humankind and the final [37] realisation of his vocation is the way to the kingdom of God. This not only the kingdom of heaven, but also the kingdom of the transfigured earth, the transfigured cosmos.

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