

# THE WAY OF LIFE



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He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:23-27).

Christ “is the head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18) ... and for us “now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, ... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:21-27).

The Father “shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; ... He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ...ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:16-20).

“But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Amen, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. ... For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:17-20).

“Love the brotherhood” (I Peter 2:17).

The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ.

Preserving the Faith of Christ and the teaching of the Apostles, bringing it up to the present day.

## The Way of Life

We are born, we live, we die. Such is the history of every man: a beginning and an end, a start and a finish. Everyone knows his own history, but his beginning he will know from others and from his observations of the nature of the world. Through the same means, he will learn to expect his end.

Just so is it with the history of the world. The Word of God, Himself the beginning, delivered the knowledge of the world’s beginnings to our Fathers of old, who delivered it to us. This knowledge was not a product of human intellect and imagination, “but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21).

The people of God, His chosen servants, the Saints, through their existence and way of life, through the spoken and written word, have preserved and delivered to us the history of God’s love and purpose for us.

God created man from the dust of the earth and placed him in the Paradise of delight, promising him the enjoyment of immortality if man kept God’s commandments. But when man was led astray and disobeyed, becoming subject to death as the consequence of his transgression, our good God and Father did not abandon him. God provided a new way of rebirth, of reformation, in the Word of God Himself. He visited us in His mercy, by sending Prophets and Saints who in many generations wrought great wonders. They proclaimed His majesty and providence, declaring the salvation that was to come. God gave us laws for our help and guarded us with His angels. When the fulness of time was come, our Heavenly Father spoke to us through His Hypostatic Word, Who became man: a perfect man, both body and soul, born from a virgin. He humbled Himself, God before the ages, taking the form of a servant, becoming conformable to the body of our lowliness that He might make us conformable to the image of His glory (Phil. 3:21). “When the fulness of the time

was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). He dwelt in the world, making known to us the precepts of salvation and drawing us away from the worship of the idols and of the letter, and brought us to the knowledge of the true God and Father. He cleansed us with water and hallowed us with the All-holy Spirit. He condemned sin in His own flesh by descending into Hades to rescue the dead of generations past, who were imprisoned by the devil. He humbled Himself in descending; conquering, He arose as victor, the God-man Jesus, destroying the devil and sin, death and corruption. Henceforth, He makes all men free who believe in Him, are baptized, and are in communion with His flesh and blood (Jn. 3:5; Jn. 6:53-56).

He sent forth His Apostles as disciples to proclaim everywhere the new dispensation of freedom, the Law of love. He endowed them with the Holy Spirit, with the power to continue the salvation of God throughout all ages to the end of time, “not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (II Cor. 2:4-5).

The Apostles preached Christ and the Kingdom of God and many believed. The Holy Gospels, the memoirs of those first Apostles, were used both to establish and confirm the preaching of the Apostles’ successors and to validate the witness of the body of believers. This body of believers, whether assembled in temporary gatherings or in permanent institutions and organizations, is called the Church.

The fact of the preaching and of the institution of the Church is unarguable, for it is a historical fact verifiable by external and objective human criteria, by the investigation and sciences of this world. The world can know the fact of the preaching, but only the Church can know its meaning.

The Christian Faith abides in the memory and life of the community of believers which is called and joined together into a living body by the Holy Spirit. Through the Saints of the Old and New Testament and the Fathers of all ages, we receive rebirth in the Church and the true teaching of God on how and what to believe and how to live. It is this “Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints” (Jude 3) for which we earnestly contend. We proclaim it and deliver it unalloyed and pure just as we received it, according to the witness of the Saints of ages past, the holy men of old, and of all history, both secular and sacred.

God began history when He created all things.

Man distorted history and the world when he turned away from God, rejecting God and God’s gift.

God Himself now comes to man, and offers directly, in a material and physical way perceivable by all (“God shall come visibly, yea, our God, and shall not keep silence” Ps. 49:3, LXX), that grace of sonship, of adoption into the divinity. “God became man so that man might become god,” says St Athanasius the Great (*On the Incarnation*, c. A.D. 330).

We testify that all this is true. Our continuous witness from the time of Jesus Christ until today, verifies the words of this Gospel, it confirms the preaching of the Apostles and of all those Saints who came after.

The Word is one, unchanged, ever living, and present through the Holy Spirit, calling everyone to Him and granting His gift and grace unto them that believe in His name.

The Word is present bodily in the assembly, in the communion, in the brotherhood He established in His Church, built up and sustained through His Holy Spirit.

“Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body ... Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that