

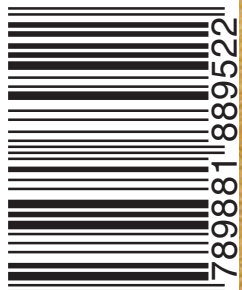


Missionary Leaflets

WHAT
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Orthodox Brotherhood
Of Apostles
Saints Peter And Paul



Orthodox Fellowship of
ALL SAINTS OF CHINA







Missionary Leaflets

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

by Archpriest Lev Lebedev and
Archimandrite Alexander

Translated by Hieromonk Herman Ciuba

Orthodox Brotherhood Of Apostles Saints Peter And Paul
Orthodox Fellowship of All Saints of China
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ORTHODOX BROTHERHOOD
OF APOSTLES SAINTS PETER AND PAUL

P.O.Box 20462
Hennessy Road Post Office
Hong Kong

tel: +852 9438 5021
fax: +852 2290 9125
e-mail: church@orthodoxy.hk
www.orthodoxy.hk

Orthodox Fellowship of All Saints of China

Mitrophan Chin

tel: +1-857-829-1569
fax: +1-763-431-0511
e-mail: mitrophan@orthodox.cn
<http://orthodox.cn>







THE TRAGIC TWO-SIDEDNESS OF OUR WORLD

FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD we are constantly confronted by the unpleasant fact that the world in which we live is **two-sided** and **contradictory**.

On one hand, it is majestic and beautiful. Nature enchants us with her beauty, her immenseness and her gentleness. Life beckons to us with all its riddles and (so it seems) its boundless possibilities. We sometimes feel within ourselves great energy and ability. We think that everything has been set up for our happiness, our enjoyment and our progress.

At the same time, we constantly run up against the fact that so much of what is enchanting and beautiful about this world ends in destruction and death. In nature there are storms, earthquakes, drought and epidemics, from which plants and animals suffer and die. In human society we see deception, dissension, robbery, violence and war. In families we see enmity and quarrelling. Even in ourselves we frequently feel discord and disturbances. We are afflicted with doubts; we are affected by unexpected troubles and disappointments; we are deprived of our planned activities by illness. It appears that there is nothing sure and constant in the world. Fame does not endure. Riches slip away between our fingers. Brief moments of happiness are followed by





long periods of emptiness and aimlessness. Material things become tiresome. Friends deceive us. Loved ones betray our trust. Dreams do not come true. A few minutes of joy are succeeded by a feeling of barrenness and discontent. Youth is replaced by old age. Death is always waiting for people of every age, waiting to cast down into the dust all human hopes and plans.

What is the reason for these opposite and contradictory perceptions of the world? Why does the world seem to give with one hand, only to take away with the other hand? Why does it build up only to tear down? Is it possible that it gives us times of joy only in order to make our disappointment more bitter later? Does the world allure us only to strike at us? Does it give us the joy of life only that it may later grieve us mercilessly with death?

Furthermore, if the world is by its very nature a duality, like the positive and negative charges of atomic particles, then why is it that we, who are an organic part of it, cannot reconcile ourselves to this duality, but rather long for complete harmony and order? Why do we have within us such a burning thirst for life and endless happiness, when death and dissolution are just as natural as life and development? What is more, no matter how much we tell ourselves that someday we will all have to die, and that death is the natural end of every creature, we have a stubborn subconscious resistance to this thought; we demand the continuation of life, even when it is linked with incredible effort and suffering.

It turns out that the greatest contradiction in this world lies within our very selves. There is some aspect of our nature which does not think and feel according to the laws of the physical world, but according to some other, spiritual, kind of laws. This is why man can never be reconciled with the facts of destruction and death. They will always remain for him things that are unnatural and unacceptable. Every-





one, perhaps without thinking about it, would like to live in a world free from contradictions, a world where harmony and justice rule, where joy is not dimmed by sorrow, where life knows no end.

Is it possible that, as asserted by certain philosophers (such as Plato, with his world of ideas), our soul once dwelt in some other and better world, filled with harmony, and that it then fell into this imperfect world against its own will, and therefore it subconsciously longs for the ideal world? Such a possibility is fascinating, and it could partially explain the general dissatisfaction felt by mankind, but isn't it just a dream?

Belief in the existence of God, in His infinite goodness and power, suggests to us that He made us for happiness. It is He Who gave us an unquenchable thirst for perfection and the attainment of happiness; therefore, there must be another world, one which is better and more perfect than ours. But where is it and how do we reach it?

A clear and precise answer to this most important and besetting question is provided by Christianity. It unequivocally affirms that there really does exist another and better world, called paradise or the kingdom of heaven, in which the angels and the souls of just dwell. It is a world without the contradictions and injustices of our own; it is free from crime, violence, sickness and death. It is a world where never-ending life and harmony are the rule, where all rational beings, illumined by the life-giving light of their Creator, ceaselessly contemplate His beauty and rejoice in His incalculable mercies.

Our physical world was also created by God for goodness, life and happiness, but sin has disfigured and corrupted it.





WHERE DOES EVIL COME FROM?

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES explain that the tragedy which overtook the human race had its actual beginnings in the **world of the angels**, perhaps even before the appearance of the physical universe. One of the highest angels which God created, named Lucifer, or the Daystar, became puffed up with pride, so that he thought he was the brightest, mightiest and most beautiful of all the angels, that he had no further need of his Creator and was not obliged to serve Him. Lucifer's goal was to make himself a kind of god, an object of veneration for other angels. To this end he raised a rebellion in heaven and won over to his side a certain segment of the angelic world. Thus Lucifer, who was later called Satan, or the devil (meaning a slanderer), was the initiator of the very worst of sins, **pride** and **self-satisfaction**, which serve as the basis for all other sins and vices. Lucifer planned to found a kingdom of "free" and "independent" spirits, separated from God. But this kingdom, founded on the principles of sin, was a clear failure, and came to be known as **hell** or the abyss. Instead of a promised paradise, it became a place of impenetrable darkness and unending misery. It became so terrible that the fallen angels themselves, the demons or devils, fear it, and wish to escape from it, as from a prison (Luke 8:31).

The devil was not content with having caused a tragedy in the world of pure spirits, with having founded his own kingdom. Because he hated God and all that God had created, he decided to bring evil to the crown of God's creation, the first man. For this purpose he assumed the form of a serpent and tempted Adam and Eve to break God's commandment by eating of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3). He was a skilful seducer; he convinced them that, if they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, they would become all-knowing and mighty, like God. He deceived them with the same idea





with which he had once deceived himself: the possibility of becoming godlike easily and all at once, without the Creator, even in opposition to the Creator. And so, man was ruined by the same sins which had already ruined Lucifer: pride and self-love.

In this way, the tragedy of sin was passed down from the world of angels to our physical world, and as a result our earthly life was filled with contradictions, sorrows and corruption. In consequence of the Fall, the first human beings lost their relationship with God; they were deprived of their life in paradise and became mortal. Worst of all, the contagion of sin, like a liquid flowing from a contaminated fountain, was passed on to their descendants, so that all people would henceforth be born with a damaged nature. The descendants of Adam and Eve, being predisposed to sin, took the line of least resistance and began to commit all sorts of evil acts, hurting, cheating and even killing one another. This sinful way of life caused man's consciousness to become more and more darkened, so that in time he lost a true conception of his Maker and started to worship his own handiwork, in the form of various idols, both literal and figurative (such as greed, worldly goods, luxury, earthly fame and all kinds of fleshly pleasures).

The more mankind wallowed in wickedness, the stronger the devil became, and soon that originator of evil came to exercise a cruel mastery over man. Thus, as time went on, our beautiful world, created by God, and represented by His highest creatures, men made in His own image, sank into a state of evil, ruled by enmity, lies, injustice, suffering and death. What was even worse, mankind in its wretchedness proved to be completely **helpless**, unable to cast off the shackles of sin and turn back to God. The infernal serpent wished to make this once-beautiful, God-created world into a copy of hell, by skillfully manipulating human weaknesses and passions.

The only one who could rescue mankind from this desperate state of affairs was the Creator, our loving **heavenly**





Father. When people were fully convinced of their own helplessness, and when they were spiritually mature enough to receive a Saviour, He sent into the world His Son, Who, while always remaining one God with the Father, by the descent of the Holy Spirit took flesh of the very purest and fairest of the daughters of man, the Ever-Virgin Mary. He became a Man, like us in everything but sin.

The purpose of His coming among us was to **liberate** man from the tyranny of Satan and from the oppression of sin, and to put him on the path to spiritual renewal, which would lead back to God and eternal blessedness.

THERE IS SALVATION ONLY IN CHRIST

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"
(John 14: 6).

Christ Is the Way

At a moment in mankind's history which had been determined by God and foretold by prophets, about 2000 years ago, in the ancient nation of Israel, the Saviour of the world was born — Jesus Christ, the **Messiah** Who had been foretold by the ancient prophets.

At His Incarnation a great and unfathomable mystery came to pass. In the **one Person** of the Son of God there were united **two natures**: His Divinity, Which was before all time, and the humanity Which He assumed, so as to become like us in every way.

Living among men, Jesus Christ taught them by His Words and His own example to believe correctly and to live righteously. His public ministry did not last long, only three and half years, but it was extraordinarily full. His every word





and act reflected His infinite wisdom, love and moral perfection. He shone like a brilliant light that had come to us from the ideal world above, a Light Which enlightens, and will continue to enlighten, every person who seeks goodness.

The teachings of Jesus Christ contained everything that people needed to know in order to live rightly; however, man had become morally weakened, so much so that he was unable to attain spiritual renewal by his own efforts alone. Sin had grown its roots too deep in human nature; evil had acquired such immense strength in all aspects of human life that men could not throw off its yoke by their own unaided efforts.

Therefore, out of unfathomable compassion for us sinners, and moved by His immeasurable love, the Righteous One took upon Himself the sins of all men — **the sins of each one of us** — and on their account offered a **redemptive sacrifice** on the Cross. With His most pure Blood He washed away our guilt before God; by His Death He conquered our death. Then, descending into the depths of hell, He, as Almighty God, freed and led out the souls of all those who wished to return to God and to live rightly. He took away Satan's power over men and set the day of his final condemnation in fiery Gehenna.

Why was it necessary to have such a terrible sacrifice as the shameful and excruciatingly painful death on the Cross of Christ, the God-Man? Was there not any other way for God to bring about man's salvation? These are mysteries which we cannot comprehend. We only know that Christ's redemptive sufferings, together with His glorious Resurrection from the dead, contain a power by which we can be **born again**. Through this great power, which overcomes all obstacles, any sinner, no matter how deeply he has sunk in the mire of vice, can undergo a complete spiritual renewal; he can become a righteous person, and even a great saint.

Forty days after His Resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, where He now abides as the





God-Man. He is the Head of the Church, and together with the Father and the Holy Spirit He governs the world. On the fiftieth day after His Resurrection, Jesus Christ sent down the Holy Spirit on His Apostles and disciples and founded the Church, to which He entrusted everything needed for the salvation of believers.

If the Son of God Himself undertook to perform such extraordinary acts, coming down to the earth, taking on Himself human nature, suffering and dying the shameful and exceedingly painful death of the Cross, it is clear that there cannot be any way to salvation other than that which is offered to us by Jesus Christ.

Thanks to all that our Lord Jesus Christ did, everyone is now able to be freed from sins, to throw off the burden of passions, to be spiritually renewed and to start to live rightly, with the help of His grace. Anyone who wishes can now attain eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. The devil cannot stop us, unless we fall away from Christ through our own carelessness or lack of seriousness.

Thus, thanks to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, immortality and the bliss of paradise are not the dream of poets or the fantasy of philosophers, but a **reality accessible to all**. Everyone who wishes can reach the kingdom of heaven by following the path indicated by the Saviour, and by imitating Him as much as possible. He is the **ideal of moral perfection, the supreme criterion of truth, the infallible spiritual authority and the inexhaustible source of inspiration**.

Truly, He is our **Way, Truth and Life!** All other “great teachers” of mankind (such as Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, and including the founders of today’s totalitarian cults) turn out to be poor parodies if they are set up in opposition to Christ, or if they are used in an effort to “correct” or “improve” what He said and did.





Christ Is the Truth

God the Father foreordained that men should find salvation through His Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. All that Jesus Christ did and said is contained in the New Testament portion of the Bible, in what are called the **Gospels**, of which there are four. The Old Testament portion of the Bible contains the writings of the prophets who lived before the time of Christ. Their purpose was to prepare the human race to receive Christ as the **Messiah**, that is, the Saviour anointed by God. The books of the New Testament were written by the disciples of Christ, the Apostles, and set forth the teachings of Jesus Christ more fully and in greater detail.

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, teaches that everything visible and invisible was created by God from nothing. First God made the invisible world of the angels (heaven), and then our visible or material world (earth). To crown His creation of the material world, God made man, adorning him with His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27). The physical world was made by God not all at once, but in **stages**, which are called in the Bible “days.” God did not make the world out of any necessity or need for it, but because of His all-good desire that other beings, created by Him, should enjoy the gift of life.

Being infinitely good, God made everything **good**, **beautiful** and **pure**. Just as the angels were, man was also predestined for eternal life and everlasting blessedness in a union of grace with His Creator. The Creator was pleased to honour man with His most precious gift, **free will**, in order that man might grow towards perfection in the moral life. By this gift God gave rational beings a **dignity** incomparably greater than the rest of irrational nature, but at the same time it was a **test**. Being a boundless ocean of love (1 John 4:8-12), God wanted us all to **love Him** with the purest and most selfless kind of love, as tender children love their





caring father. It was His desire that we should run to Him because we ourselves wanted to do so, and that we should grow steadily towards perfection by imitating Him to the best of our ability.

In order for us to get to know Him more fully, God revealed to us that He is not simply Oneness (a monad), but **Three-in-Oneness**, or Trinity. This means that in God there is one divine nature or essence, but three free and rational Persons — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit — Who dwell in perfect harmony and love with one another. In the Deity, God the Father is the source of the divine nature which is common to all three; this is His hypostatic characteristic (*what characterizes Him as a distinct Person*). The Son was “begotten” from the Father before all time; the Holy Spirit “proceeds” from the Father before all time; these are their hypostatic characteristics. The words “begotten” and “proceeds,” however, do not carry any connotation of time. God was always the Trinity — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Since God is three in Persons, but **One** in essence, He desired that the human race which He created should also reflect His three-in-oneness to a certain degree. In other words, He desired men to live, not as isolated individuals, solitary “I’s,” but as “**we**,” as an **integral** and **cohesive society**, held together by love, in which each one takes the joys or sorrows of his neighbour as his very own. This, of course, was the ideal intended by the Creator. This all-encompassing unity was not meant, however, to suppress the personalities of rational beings. On the contrary, just as in the Creator Himself each Person possesses His own personal qualities, which are beyond our comprehension, so too in human society each distinct person was meant to preserve his own **individual** and **unique** characteristics, his particular talents. This **unity in multiplicity** was the type of existence that man was called to live, first of all in fam-





ily life, then in society and finally on the level of the whole human race.

As we have already said, sin did great damage to human nature. As a result, mankind was not only torn away from its Maker, but it was also broken into a multitude of individuals, who were mutually jealous and at odds. Jesus Christ intended to bring men back to the path of unity with their Maker and closeness with one another; therefore, He began His preaching with the **good** news, or glad **tidings** (which is the meaning of the Greek word Evangelion, or “Gospel”), that “*the Kingdom of God is at hand.*” God is ready to forgive each one of us and to accept him as His son, on condition that a man believe in the Saviour Whom God has sent, accept His divine teachings and begin to live rightly. Everything that Jesus Christ did and said had the purpose of teaching people and inspiring them to start to live for God, for the good, for inner renewal. The kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ had to begin **within** believers, in hearts made new by love.

After His glorious Resurrection from the dead, and shortly before His Ascension into heaven, Jesus Christ revealed that He will come to the earth **again** before the end of the world. This Second Coming of Christ will not be like the first, when He came in the form of an ordinary man, as the merciful and compassionate Saviour. He lived in poverty and meekly endured all the reproaches of sinners. Before the end of the world He will come in His heavenly glory, as the terrible and **just Judge**, surrounded by a multitude of angels and saints, and He will give each one the reward of his deeds. Immediately preceding the Second Coming of Christ the worldwide miracle of the **resurrection** of the dead will take place at His almighty command. The bodies of all the people who have ever lived on the earth will rise up out of the dust in the twinkling of an eye and will be reunited with their souls. At that time every man will be restored in his bipartite nature, in which soul and body form a single human being.





Let us recall that man was created for eternal life. Death, in the sense of complete annihilation or reduction to non-being, simply does not exist. What we call death is only the temporary separation of the soul and the body. When the body loses its life-giving principle, which is the soul, the body decomposes into the elements of which it was made up. The soul, the very personality of man, in a fully conscious and aware state, crosses over into some sphere of existence which is unknown to us, where it remains until the day of Christ's Last Judgment. At His Second Coming Christ will resurrect us in our twofold nature.

With the Second Coming of Christ the history of the human race will come to an end. The earth and everything on it, matter and the whole cosmos, will be subjected to fiery flame. Yet this fiery furnace will not be the destruction of the material world, but rather its **transfiguration**, as if in a smelter that removes all impurities. The physical world will be transformed into "*a new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-2).

Christ will pass judgement not only on men, but also on the **devil** and his **demons**. This judgement will decide the **eternal fate** of every rational creature. All who did not wish to respond to God's love with love, all who did evil and spread falsehood, will be condemned to fiery Gehenna. This will be a "*second death*," which will not be annihilation, but rather complete **separation from God** in unending and fruitless sufferings.

On the "*new earth*," under the "*new heaven*," in the "*new Jerusalem*," a new life will begin, the happy and endless life which God foreordained from all eternity for those who love Him. There will be that true **salvation**, for which each man thirsts, thought not always knowingly. The purpose for which God in His boundless love created us will finally be realized.





Christ is the Life

The goal, then, of our earthly life is to inherit **eternal life** in the kingdom of heaven. To reach it our loving Creator requires of us only that we respond to Him with the kind of sincere, pure and selfless **love** with which He loves us.

Such love is a spring which flows from this temporal life into the beauty of eternal life. The reason for man's life is to become more and more like God and to draw nearer and nearer to Him. The substance of our life should be the continuous upholding of everything in us that furthers nearness to God and rejection of everything that takes us away from Him.

How can the fire of such love and such striving be kindled in the soul? Once it is lit, how can it be guarded, so that it is not allowed to go out, but rather, as much as possible, it is turned into the flame of salvation, which burns up all impurity in the heart? Man cannot do this by his own power, no matter how sincerely he desires it. The winds and waves of the passions are too strong, and they come from sources hostile to man: the world which lies in sin, the flesh which loves sin and the devil, the originator of all evil.

For salvation, therefore, it is necessary to **cling** to Christ with all one's strength, to become **one** with Him. Then His divine power and His love will fill our souls. They will protect, sanctify and strengthen us; they will lead us on the sure but narrow path to eternal life. Christ speaks thus about the necessity of staying with Him: *"I am the Vine, ye are the branches. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine"* (John 15:5). In other words, authentic spiritual life, which brings forth good fruit, is impossible unless one is united in the closest possible way with the Source of spiritual strength — Christ.





The Need for the Church

The mystery of the Church, the kingdom of God — a mystery which is great and wise, surpassing our understanding — was brought into being by Christ in the following way. First, when He was baptized by John in the Jordan, at the moment when the Holy Spirit came down and the voice of the Father was heard, He **sanctified the nature of water**. By this act the water of Baptism became a conduit of God's grace, which gives a man new birth. Christ taught that a man is spiritually born and becomes a member of the Church only by being "*born of water and of the Spirit*" in the sacrament of **Baptism** (John 3:5).

Just as a newborn infant requires nourishment in order to grow, so also one who is born anew in the mystery of Baptism requires spiritual nourishment, which the Lord gives us in the sacrament of **Holy Communion**, of which He says: "*I am that bread of life. ... The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. ... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. ... He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me*" (John 6:48-57).

At His Mystical Supper, the evening before He suffered on the Cross, Christ Himself first changed bread into His true Flesh and wine into His true Blood and gave Them in communion to His disciples, thereby showing them how the Sacrament of Holy Communion should be observed.

From that time on, the sacrament of Holy Communion has been celebrated at a divine service, called the **Liturgy**. Believers receive the Flesh and Blood of Jesus Christ and are thereby united with Him, and not in a purely abstract or mystical sense, but **really** and **truly**! The whole being of a man, spiritual and physical, partakes of the spiritual and physical life of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. Love opens a path to spiritual closeness; moreover, in Holy Communion, while people are





united with Christ, they are united with one another at the same time, and in Christ they become a **single whole, a living organism**, called the Church. This is why the Apostle Paul called the Church the Body of Christ (Col. 1:24).

Just as the Incarnation of the Son of God was accomplished by the descent of the **Holy Spirit** on the Virgin Mary, so also the Church was founded on the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus Christ sent from the Father to the Apostles on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection. Since that day the Holy Spirit has remained with the Church constantly, giving it life, illuminating it and cultivating it as a single living organism of the Body of Christ, consisting of many “members,” faithful Christians.

There is something which must not be forgotten, especially in our times when Christianity is being split up into more and more churches and “jurisdictions.” Man is called to be saved not by a mere mental acknowledgement of the truth of Christianity, and not merely by his own best efforts, but by **belonging organically** to the living body of the Church. Only in the Church, in this mystical Body of Christ, does the believer find correct spiritual guidance and the strength necessary for an authentically Christian life.

THE TRUE CHURCH, ONE AND INDIVISIBLE

SINCE ITS BIRTH IN THE DAYS of the Apostles, the Church of Christ has absorbed into itself people from many nations along its historical path. It has gradually grown from strength to strength “*unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Eph. 4:13). As a mighty tree grows from a little seed, or as a mature adult develops from an infant, so the Church of Christ, which once consisted of twelve fishermen, has at the present reached its full flowering. It has become a beautiful





tree, covered with many branches and leaves (Matt. 13:32), with a developed doctrine, liturgics, symbolism, and rules, or canons, which embrace all aspects of its life and the life of each individual member. The canons of the Church are the laws necessary for its life and activity, just as there are laws which govern the living organism of the human body.

Christ cannot have several “bodies”; similarly, there can only be **one** Church of Christ.

The realities of contemporary life bring us face to face with the existence of a multitude of Christian denominations, all claiming the title of “Church.” Both Catholics and Protestants of various kinds — Baptists, Adventists, Pentecostals and even the followers of the most fanatical cults -all insist on the truth of their teachings.

One of reasons for the divisions in Christianity, as in any other original idea, can be found in the Second Law of Thermodynamics, according to which every physical system tends toward a maximum of entropy, i.e., towards maximum disorder. But inasmuch as Christ founded the Church for man’s salvation, it is certain that the **leading** and **most active** role in the division of Christianity has at all times been played by the **devil**, that age-old enemy of God and man.

When Christ called the devil “*a liar and the father of lies*” (John 8:44). He indicated the chief method used by the devil, namely, lying. In order to tear as many people as possible away from the Church, the devil first of all tries to put into their minds false ideas about religion, or heresies. When someone is then captivated by some new idea, taking it for a divine revelation, he imagines himself to be God’s messenger, and begins to spread his pernicious doctrine with the greatest zeal and self-sacrifice. Everything he does is directed (so he thinks) toward “improving,” “purifying” or “completing” the Christian religion. When the Church rejects some new heresy, the self-styled prophets separate themselves from it. They lead away some of the faithful and found new churches,





which they declare to be the true Church, while they say that Christ's Church has gone astray and does not understand His teaching.

In this way all sorts of heresies have sprung up and continue to do so, from apostolic times until the present. First came Arianism, Monophysitism and Iconoclasm. Later, Roman Catholicism departed from the true Church. From it came the churches of the Reformation, the Protestants, and from them, as from a veritable horn of plenty, flowed countless contemporary sects. These new sects are basically a repetition of heresies which were long ago condemned by Councils; they are just dressed up in new words.

As for those people who adhere steadfastly to the true teaching of Christ, the devil attempts to tear them away from the Church by means of schisms and parish strife. Once again, he cleverly suggests to people seemingly good reasons for correcting some deficiency or improving some existing situation. The trouble lies not so much with some particular customs or external activities, which may not be the best, and may be in need of correction; the real trouble is that people start **quarrelling among themselves** and then split into hostile groups.

How can a simple believer see his way clear amidst the confusing array of a multitude of churches, denominations and cults?

In order to find the answer to this question, we must understand that the true Church has to be one that has an unbroken continuity with apostolic times, so that it preserves the Apostles' teaching, their traditions and an unbroken line of apostolic succession, which runs from one bishop to the next. As a living organism, the Church grows and develops, but at the same time it must maintain the **unity** and **identity** of its own theanthropic nature.

In the Symbol of Faith, the Creed, we say, "I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church." Such belief assumes the





oneness of the Church, as the unity of a living organism, in which everything is closely linked together; this means unity in faith and doctrine, in liturgical life and in canonical order. All these things serve to guarantee that believers will be able to share in what is most important: in the sacrament of Holy Communion and in prayer. The various ancient Orthodox Churches were thus united in this communion; they formed, in essence, one Church, which was, as it were, a reflection of the Trinity and Unity of the one Divine Essence in diverse persons.

Some people put forward a theory which supposes that the Church of Christ was once one but was later “divided” into parts, including the Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, etc.; each of these parts is a “Christian Church,” containing pieces of the truth; each is a sort of fragment of the once-united Apostolic Church. All of them, therefore, should now join together, first in a “dialogue of love,” and then in prayer, and finally in the Eucharist. At the same time, each of these “churches” will retain its own teachings — in other words, its heresies. Such an approach to the question of unity ignores the fact that the true Church, the one founded by the Apostles, already **exists** in our own day, and according to Christ’s promise it will exist until the end of the world (Matt. 16:18). Since this is so, the right thing to do would be for those who have fallen away to **return** to it. The Church is not some human organization; it is the Body of Christ! If the discussion was simply about cooperation among people on the practical, earthly level, it would be natural for people to join together by mutual agreement. But since we are talking about uniting with the Church, all that is purely human must be set aside. What is necessary is to come back to Christ fully, to accept His teachings in their fullness, without any amendments or modernizations. It is necessary to rehabilitate that structure of the Church which was set up by Christ’s Apostles.





Christ cannot have several “bodies”; likewise, there cannot be several parallel true Churches, because the Church is the Body of Christ, which, like every living organism, is indivisible. Therefore, there have never been, and by rights there cannot be, divisions of the Church. There were, and still are, **heresies and schisms**, which have fallen away from the Church. For this reason the ancient canons (rules) of the Church strictly forbid any kind of communion in prayer with those who have fallen away, i.e., with heretics, until they return to the Church by repentance.

Every man can find the salvation intended for him only in Orthodoxy, in the true Body of Christ. One who truly loves God will surely desire to be united with Him. In this love lies the essence of Christianity! Those who sincerely love Christ should be drawn by this love into the true Church!

If certain present-day “wise men” assert, that there are various paths leading to God, just as various trails lead to the summit of a mountain, it must be kept in mind that He Who offered Himself as the sole Way, Truth and Life is the Son of God, the God-Man. Those who teach anything else, or who lead men by other paths, are “*thieves and robbers*” (John 10:8).

CONCLUSION

THE REASON FOR OUR INTERNAL DISHARMONY, for all the difficulties and all the calamities in the world, is sin. Christ revealed to man the path to salvation from sins. We are called to salvation not in isolation, as if on little canoes scattered over a stormy sea, but rather in the great “ship” of the Church, captained by Christ.

There is one God, glorified in the Trinity, and His truth is one. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, and His Church is one. There is one Communion, and there are no other “paths” or “churches” but the one, authentic, Orthodox Church, which





has preserved and cultivated that which she received and continues to receive from Christ her Head and the Holy Spirit, Who lives and acts in her.

In our times the Church is not very great in numbers. Still, the word of God applies to her: *"Fear not, little flock. I have overcome the world"* (Luke 12:32; John 16:33). He says, moreover: *"Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"* (Rev. 3:8-10).

What is most important in our journey through this temporal life is to hold fast to the Truth, the Way and the Life — our Lord Jesus Christ, Who ever abides in His Church.









结语

因为我们内在的不协调，世界上所有困难与灾难的原因是罪恶。耶稣向人类揭示从罪恶中解救的道路。我们被号召解救而不是隔绝，不是像许多只小的独木舟分散在一个风大浪急的海面上，而是在一艘由耶稣掌舵的教会的「船舰」上。

有一位神，即荣耀的三位一体，他的真理是唯一的。有一位主，耶稣基督，他的教会是唯一的。有一个宗教团体，是真实可信，正统的教会。除它以外，没有其他「途径」或者「教会」，它接受并继续接受着来自她的头领——居于教会并运行在教会中的基督及圣灵的保护与牧养。

在我们的时代，教会在数量上并不庞大。然而，上帝的话仍旧适用于教会：你们这小群，不要惧怕。我已经战胜了世界。¹⁶ 他还说：你略有一点力量，也曾遵守我的道，没有弃绝我的名。那撒但一会的，自称是犹太人，其实不是犹太人，乃是说谎话的，我要使他们来在你脚前下拜，也使他们知道我是已经爱你了。你既遵守我忍耐的道，我必在普天下人受试炼的时候，保守你免去你的试炼。¹⁷

在我们短暂的人生旅程中最重要的是紧紧抓住真理，道路及生命——永远与他教会临在的我主耶稣基督。

16 路喀福音／路加 12:32；约安福音／约／若 16:33

17 约安之默示录／默 3:8-10



每个人都只能在正教，在真正的基督的身体里找到救赎。每个真正爱上帝的人都渴望与上帝统一。基督教的本质就是以爱为基础！真挚爱基督的人会因着这种爱被吸引进真正的教会中。

如果现在有些「智者」断言，有许许多多的途径能通向上帝，正如许多不同的道路可以到达山脉顶峰，它必须紧记地是上帝之子——既是神，又是人把他自己献

出来作为唯一的道路、真理及生命。那些传授其他任何事情的或引导们通过其他途径的是「小偷与强盗」。¹⁵

15 约安福音／约／若 10:8



部分都是曾经传从使徒的唯一的教会的一种片段。因此，所有教会应该现在结合在一起，首先以一种「爱的对话」，然后在祈祷，最后在圣餐礼上。同时，这些「教会」的每一个会保留它特有的教义——换句话说，它的异端。如此通向统一的问题的途径忽视了一个事实，那就是由使徒建立的真正的教会已经存在于我们特有的每一天，而且根据基督的话语，它将一直存在直到世界末日。⁴ 既然如此，该做的事可能是为那些已背离他而想回到他身边的人。教会不是某些社会组织；它是基督的身体！如果讨论的是简单的在人们之间的有关实践，俗世的水平的合作，那么人们通过相互的立约结合在一起是很自然的。但是既然我们在讨论与教会的统一，所有纯粹人类的事情必须搁置在一边。必要的事情是完全回到基督的身边，尽他们最大可能接受他的教义，没有任何的修改或者更新。有必要重塑由基督的使徒所建立起的教会的结构。

耶稣不能有几个「身体」；同样地，不可能有几个相同的真正的教会，因为教会是基督的身体，如每种活的有机体是不能分割的。因此教会从未被分裂过，人类也没有权利这样做。一直都存在背离教会的异教与分裂。由于这个原因，古老的教会的教规严格禁止与那些远离教堂的人与异教者在祈祷中有任何共融，直到他们通过悔改回到教会。



对于那些踏踏实实不变地追随耶稣真正教义的人，魔鬼试图通过教会分裂与教区间的斗争使他们背离教会。再一次，他机灵地给予人们一些好的建议表面上似乎是为改正一些不足或者改善一些存在的境况。关键不在于一些特殊习惯或是外部活动，这些也许不是最重要的或是需要改正的问题。真正的问题在于人们开始在他们自己内部间反目成仇，然后分裂成敌对团体。

一个简单的信徒，怎么能在纷扰的教会，教派与迷信中认清自己的方向呢？

为了找到该问题的答案，我们必须理解真正的教会是自使徒开始一直连续的教会，从而它保存着使徒的教导、传统及从使徒传承下来的一条不曾断开的继承线；该路线从一个主教传到下一个主教。作为一个活的有机体，教会成长并发展着，但同时它必须保持它特有的神人两性的统一与一致的本性。宗教信仰象征中，即我们说的信经，「我信唯一，神圣，传自使徒的大公教会。」这样的信仰承认了教会的唯一性，如活的有机体的统一，通过它万物很亲近地联系在一起；这意味着信仰与教条的统一，礼拜式的生活与规范的秩序。所有这些东西用以保证信徒将能分享什么是最重要的：在圣餐礼与祈祷中。不同的古老的正统教会因此以这种共融联合在一起；在本质上，他们就是一个教会，以不同的位格，反映出上帝的三位一体性与神性。

有些人提出一个理论。该理论猜想基督教的教会曾经是一个，但是后来被分成许多部分，包括东正教，天主教，新教等等；这里的每一部分都是、基督教的教会，包含真理的各个部份，每



关于基督教分裂的其中一个原因，我们可以从热力学的第二定律找到其中的原因之一：那就是每个物理系统都会倾向于最高的熵，即达到最大的混乱。尽管基督为人类的救赎建立了教会，但可以肯定的是基督教会的分裂自始至终都是魔鬼——上帝与人类古老的天敌，在扮演着主要的、最活跃的角色。

当基督称魔鬼是「说谎者与谎言之父时」¹³。他指明魔鬼使用的主要的方式，也就是，说谎。为了尽可能使很多人远离教会，魔鬼首先试着使他们的思想对有关宗教或者异教有着错误的认识。当有人被一些新的想法所诱惑，想当然地把它当成一个神圣的启示时，他设想自己为上帝的使者，开始以极大的热情与自我牺牲的精神来传播他的有害的教条。他所做的每件事情都向着（他这么认为）「改善」「净化」或者「完善」基督教的信仰。当教会反对一些新的异端邪说，自诩为先知的人把他们自己从教会里分离出来。他们使一些信徒盲从并成立新的教会，他们宣称新的教会为真正的教会，而且他们说基督的教会已经走入歧途且并不能理解他的教导。

从使徒时代直到现在，以这种方式各种各样的异教蓬勃发展并继续这样发展。首先来自阿里乌斯教，基督一性论和圣像破坏主义。后来，罗马天主教会与真正的教会分离。宗教改革也随之而来，新教也由此产生；于是就出现了当代无数的教派协会。这些新的宗派基本上是在很久前被大公会议宣告有罪的异教的复制品；他们仅仅是用新的语言做伪装。

真正的教会，是独一无二且不可分割的

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自教会从出自于使徒，基督的教会沿着它历史的道路已经吸收了来自许多国家的人们。它逐渐变得越来越强大，「达到耶稣长成的丰满的身材」^[1]。当一颗强大的树从小小的树苗长大，或者一个成熟的成人从婴儿发展，同样地，基督的教会，曾经由^[2]个渔夫组成，目前已经达到了花枝繁茂的景像。它变成一颗美丽的树^[3]，由许多藤与树叶覆盖，有一个成熟的教条，礼拜学，象征学，与规则，或者教规，包含它的生活中的所有方面与每个个体成员的生活。教会的教规是对它的生活与行动的必要的法律，正如统治着人类身体的活的有机体。

耶稣不能有几个「身体」；同样的，基督的教会只能有一个。

当代的现实生活使我们不得不去面对对众多基督教派的存在。所有的教派都宣称自己是「基督教会」。既有天主教与各种不同派别的新教——浸信会，基督复临派，五旬节派，甚至还有许多狂热的邪教追崇者——都坚持他们的教导是真理。

11 致艾弗所人书 / 弗 4:13

12 玛特泰福音 / 太 / 玛 13:32



从那时开始，圣餐礼在礼拜中被举行，称作事奉圣礼。信徒领受耶稣基督的身体与宝血，因此与他联合在一起，不是以一种纯粹的想像，而是真正地实实在在地与他同在！一个完整的人，像耶稣基督一样，精神与肉体完整地相结合。爱开辟了精神结合的道路。同时，在圣餐中，人类不仅与上帝相连，也彼此相连；在基督中，人类是一个**完整体**，一个**生物机体**，叫做教会。这就是为什么使徒保罗呼吁教会的存在。¹⁰

正如上帝的化身圣子就是在圣母玛丽下得以上升为**圣灵**，因此，教会就在圣灵降临的那一天成立。在他复活的第33天，圣父差遣圣灵降到使徒身上。从那一天起，圣灵就一直与教会同在，给予教会生命，启明教会，牧养教会，作为一个

有些事情必须不能被忘记，特别在我们的时代当基督教被分裂为越来越多的教会与「教会区域」时。人类不仅仅只是心理上承认基督教会的真理，而是尽他们最大的努力，来维系这个**生物机体**。只有在教会中，只有在基督中，信徒才能找到正确的精神指导，才能获得力量，才能拥有真正的基督生活。



关于教会的需要

教堂的奥秘，上帝的国度——一个远远超越人类想象的谜，一个伟大而充满智慧的谜，就这样奇迹般地被耶稣带到了我们面前。首先，当他在约旦被约翰洗礼，就在那圣灵从天降下，圣父发声之时，他圣化了水的本性。通过这种由水施洗变成上帝恩宠的渠道，赐予人类新的生命。耶稣教导一个人只有经「出自水与圣灵」⁸的洗礼，才是灵性的得生且成为教会的一员。

就像新生的婴儿一样有营养品才能成长，一个人要在浸洗的神秘下获得新生同样需要精神上的营养品，那是上帝给我们的圣餐，关于圣餐他说：我是生命之粮：我所要赐的粮，就是我的肉，为世人之生命所赐的。：你们若不吃人子的肉，不喝人子的血，就没有生命在你们里面，……。吃我肉喝我血的人常在我里面，我也常在他里面。永活的父怎样差我来，我又因父活着，照样，吃我肉的人，也要因我活着。⁹

在奥秘的晚餐上，在他背负十字架之前的晚上，基督他自己第一次变面包为他真正的身体，变酒为他真正的宝血，赐予他的门徒，教导他们如何遵守圣餐的礼节。

8 约安福音／约／若 3:5

9 约安福音／约／若 6:48-57



怎样才能让爱的火焰和这种努力点燃我们的灵魂？一旦被点燃，我们怎样去守护它，不让它熄灭，而是让它尽可能地成为救赎的火焰，净化心灵深处所有的杂念？人是难以凭借自己的力量达到这一点，尽管他是如此真诚地渴望。激情的风流过于强大，更何况它是来自于人类的仇敌。世界充斥着罪恶，肉体甘于堕落，屈从魔鬼，世间万恶的源泉。

为了救赎，我们必须用尽全力**依附耶稣**，努力与他成为**一体**。然后他神圣的力量和仁慈的爱将会填补我们的灵魂。他们会保护我们，赐予我们力量。他们会引导我们通向永恒生命的窄道。因此，很有必要与耶稣一道：「我是葡萄树，你们是枝子。枝子若不在葡萄树上，自己就不能结果子，除非它坚持在葡萄藤上」。换句话说，真正的灵性生命，要结出好的果实，要与灵性力量的源泉——耶稣以最亲近的方式联合在一起。否则，是不可能的。

7 约安福音／约／若 15:5





耶稣将不仅对人类，而且对魔鬼及他的帮凶进行审判。这个审判将决定每种理性的动物的永恒命运。所有不希望对上帝的爱以爱作出回应的，所有做奸犯科散布谬论的，将被遣往炽热的地狱。这将是「第二次死亡」，该死亡将不是灭绝，而是以无终止与无结果的苦难与上帝完全分离。

在「新天，新地」，「新的耶路撒冷」里，一个新的生命将开始，在「新耶路撒冷」里，将会有新的生命，在那里只有幸福与永恒的生命；在那里上帝将赐予所有爱他的人永生。这就是人类渴求的真正的救赎，尽管我们从来没意识到。在那里，宽大仁慈的上帝造就人类的意图将得以充分地诠释。

耶稣是生命

那么，我们在尘世里，生命的目标就是要去继承天国里的**永恒生命**。为了到达慈祥的上帝面前，我们就必须用真诚、纯洁和无私的爱来回应上帝，如同他爱我们一样。

这种爱就像源泉，从短暂的生命延续到美丽永恒的生命。人类生活的理由就是要越来越像上帝，并越来越接近他。我们生活的本质就应该不断地抓住一切与上帝接近的东西，坚决抵制一切使我们远离他的事物。



在他光荣的从死者中复活之后，在他上升天庭之前不久，耶稣基督曾说，他将在世界末日之前再临这个世界。基督第二次的再临不再象第一次那样，以一个普通人的模样到来，是一个极富仁慈极富同情的救世主。他生活得很贫困并温顺地承受所有罪人的责备。在世界末日来临之前，他会以一个**严厉公正的法官**，在天使和神灵的簇拥下降临人间，对每个人的行为施于赏罚。在基督第二次复临之前，普世死者复活的奇迹将在他万能的命令下发生。曾经居于世间的所有人的身体将在瞬间出离尘世与他们的灵魂结合。这时，每个人都要重塑他的双重性质，由灵魂和身体组成。

让我们唤回人类为永生而创的生命。死亡，在某种意义上是完全的灭绝或者终结，简单地说不存在。我们所称的死亡只不过是短暂的灵魂与身体的分离。当身体失去了它给与生命的原理，即灵魂，就会分解成组成它的元素。灵魂，就是人类的特性，处于一种完全清醒的有意识有知觉的状态，跨越我们未知的领域，跨越我们未知的领域，直至等待基督最后的审判。在他第二次降临人间时，就会恢复我们的双重性质。

在耶稣的第二次到来，人类种族的历史将走向结束。地球和地球上的万物，物质和整个宇宙，将遭受炽热的火焰。然而，这炽热的火炉并不是在破坏这个物质世界，而是在**锻造**，就像一个冶炼厂，去除所有的残渣。这个物质世界将会被锻造成「一个新的天堂与新的地球，在其中居住着正直的人」。



既然上帝是三个位格，一个本性，他期望他所创造的人类也应该在一定程度上反映出他的三位一体的本性。换句话说，他期望人类，不是如孤立的个体，单独的「我」，而是如「我们」，如一个整体的有凝聚力的社会，由爱团结在一起，在这个社会里，每个人把他的邻居的喜悦与悲伤当作他自己的喜悦与悲伤。当然，这是创造者想要的理想社会。但是，这种所有统一的团结不是意味着抑制理性的人的个性。相反，正如创造者他自己一样，每个人拥有他特有的个性，该个性是我们无法理解的，所以在人类社会每个截然不同的人意味着他特有的个体与唯一的个性，他的独特的才能。多样性的统一首先是家庭，然后是社会，最后上升到整个人类的世界。

正如我们已经说过的，罪已经极大地损害了人类的本性。结果，人类不仅与上帝背离，而且也变得四分五裂，他们互相忌妒与争执。耶稣基督为了引导人类走上正途，与上帝相融，彼此贴近，他开始了他的**传教**，或者说**福音**。⁵「天国近了」。上帝乐于赦免我们的罪，只要人类相信上帝派遣的救世主，相信他的教文，坦荡地生活，上帝接受我们作他的儿子。耶稣基督所说的所做的一切都是为了教导人们，鼓舞人们开始为上帝、为美好、为灵命更新而活。耶稣基督所宣讲的上帝之国始于信徒之中，始于由爱所更新心中。

⁵ 希腊词：福音战士，或「新经四福音」



而是源于他仁慈的心和善良的意愿：他认为人类也应该享受生命的礼物。

因为无限的慈善，上帝创造的万物都是好的，漂亮的与纯洁的。正如天使一样，人类也预先注定与他的创造者一同承受永恒生命和永久福泽的恩典。创造者很高兴地赐予人类他最珍贵的礼物，自由意志，为了人类能在灵命成长中变得完美。通过这个礼物，上帝给予理性动物的一种尊严，远超过其他无理性的动物的，但同时这也是个考验。因上帝是无边无际海洋般的爱¹⁴，上帝要求我们全部要以最纯洁与最无私的爱来爱他，如温柔的孩子爱他们的富有同情心的父亲。

他的愿望就是我们应该奔向他，因为我们自己也向往如此行，而且我们应该尽我们的能力最大地模仿他沿着尽善尽美有稳定地成长。

为了使我们更充分地了解他，上帝向我们显明他不是简单的单一体（单抱体），而是三者统一，或者三位一体。这意味着在上帝内心深处有一个神圣的本性或者精髓，但是有三个自由而且理性的位格——圣父，圣子和圣灵——他们相互之间很融洽与友爱。在神性中，上帝即圣父是他们三个共有神性之根源；这是他位格的特征（此表现出他有别于其他特征的位格）。在万世之前，圣子是由父而发；在万世之前，圣灵自父而发；这些是他们位格的特征。但是，单词「产生」与「发生」不带任何时代的内涵。上帝向来就是三位一体的——父，子及圣灵。

4 约安书信一 / 约壹 / 若一 4:8-12



如果他们的努力是为了「纠正」或者「改善」耶稣所说与做的事情，其结果只能证明他们是可怜的小丑。

基督是真理

上帝预定人类必须通过他唯一的独生子——我们的主耶稣基督才能得以救赎。主耶稣基督一切所做与所说的都包含在《新约》被称做福音书的四卷书里了。圣经《旧约》部分包含了在耶稣降生前的先知们的圣著。他们的作用为人类接受基督就是弥赛亚作铺垫，他即是上帝的受膏者。《新约》这本书是由耶稣的弟子，使徒们所写的，更充分更细节化地阐明出耶稣基督的教导。

圣经的第一卷，起源之书 / 创，讲述了由上帝从无开始创造了可见与不可见的万物。起先，上帝创造天使（天堂）里不可见的世界，然后是我们可见的物质世界（地球）。为立一个物质世界的统治者，上帝创造人类，用他自己的肖像与相似物修饰他³。这个物质世界并不是上帝一挥手就创造出来了，而是一步步造就，在《圣经》里被称为「天」。上帝创造这个物质世界并不是出于某种需要，



在他从死者中复活之后的第三天，耶稣基督上升天堂，作为一个神人居于天庭。他是教会的领袖，他与圣父及圣灵统治着这个世界。在他复活后的第三十天，耶稣基督差遣圣灵降在使徒与信徒身上，并建立了教会，他将一切为信徒得救的需要信托给教会。

既然上帝之子亲自着手运行如此特别的行为，降到地上，呈现出他自己的人性，遭受痛苦并蒙受十字架极其可耻和极度痛苦的死亡，显然，除了耶稣基督提供给我们的路之外没有任何其他的道路可以获得救赎。

多亏了我们的主耶稣基督为我们所做的一切，现在每个人能够从罪中得释放，在他恩典的帮助下，摆脱情欲的重担，变得灵命更新，开始生活得正直。任何希望能够在天国中获得永恒生命的人现在都可以被成就。魔鬼不能阻止我们除非我们由于我们自己的粗心大意或者缺少认真而背离耶稣。

因此，多亏了耶稣基督，上帝道成肉身之子，属天的不朽与福泽不是诗人的梦想或者哲学家的幻想，而是对于我们所有人来说都可以达到的实际。每个希望能达到天堂的人，都要照救世主指明的道路及尽可能的效法他。他是完美形象的楷模、真理的至高标准，永无错误的精神权威、永不竭尽的灵感源泉。

诚然，耶稣是我们的道路，真理与生命！他是「众师之师」（就好像孔子，拜火教的创始人，佛陀，克利须那神，穆罕默德，包括今天极权主义的礼拜的创始人）如果他们的创立是为反对耶稣，或者





德上的尽善尽美。他如一盏来自完美世界的闪亮的灯，来到我们身边照耀着，一盏启明的灯，并将继续启明每一个寻找善良的人。

基督耶稣的教导包含人们为过正直生活所需要知道的一切；然而，人类的道德已变得很脆弱，以致不能仅靠人类自己的努力达到灵命更新。罪已深深地扎根于人类的本性里之中；邪恶已经在人类生活的各个方面获得如此无边的力量以致人类不能通过他们本身单独的努力去摆脱它的束缚。

因此，出于对我们罪人无比的同情，我们被他的无可测度的仁爱所感动，无罪的耶稣亲自担当了人类所有的罪过——我们每一个人的罪——为我们在十字架上做了赎罪祭。在上帝面前，用他的最纯洁的宝血洗净了我们的罪；他用他的死亡战胜了我们的死亡。然后，下降到阴府，他，作为全能的上帝，释放并带领所有希望回到上帝身边过正直生活者的灵魂。他夺走魔鬼对于人类的权势并定下了他对地狱最终审判的日子。

为什么一定要有这样一个可怕的献祭，让基督，神人，死在这可耻而极度痛苦的十字架上？是否对于上帝而言没有其它的方式来拯救人类吗？这些是我们无法领会的奥秘。我们只知道基督赎祭的苦难，及他从死者中荣耀地复活，蕴涵了一种我们藉此能重生的力量。通过这种伟大的力量，可以克服任何的障碍，任何一个罪人，不管他已经陷入罪恶的泥潭有多深，也能承受一个完全的灵命更新；他可以变成一个正直的人，甚至一个伟大的圣人。



救世主只有基督

「我是道路，真理，与生命」。

约安福音 / 约 / 若 14:6

基督是道路

大约2000年前，在古以色列国，由上帝决定及先知们所预言人类历史的这一刻，世界的救世主出世了——耶稣基督，就是那位被古老的先知们所预言的弥赛亚。

因他的道成肉身，一个伟大且深不可测的奥迹实现了。在上帝之子这一个位格中存在两种一致的天性：他的神性，在之前的所有时间里所显现的，还有他所呈现出的人性，他在各方面都变得像我们一样。

居于人中，基督耶稣以他的言行让我们有正确的信仰与正直的生活。他公开的传道并没有持续多久，只是三年半，但却是格外的充分。他每一句话语与行为都无不反映了他无穷的智慧和爱，与道



方式造成人类的良知变得越来越黑暗，以致于最后他丧失了他的制造者真正的构想，以各种各样偶像的形式，转而开始崇拜他自己的手工作品，包括实体和虚体的。（如贪婪，世间的利益，奢侈，俗世的名誉和各种各样肉体的快感）。

堕入邪恶的人越多，魔鬼就变得越强大，很快邪恶的创造者就开始运用残酷的手段控制人类。因此，随着时间的推移，由上帝创造的我们美丽的世界，代表着他的最高级的创造物，以上帝的肖像创造出的人类，陷入罪恶的状态，为仇恨、谎言，不公正所统治，遭受苦难与死亡。更糟糕的是，人类在不幸中是完全无助的，无法摆脱罪恶的桎梏从而转向上帝。阴险的魔鬼希望使这个曾经漂亮，由上帝创造出来的世界变成地狱的复制品，通过巧妙地利用人类的软弱与情欲。

唯有创造者，我们亲爱的天父才能把人类从令人绝望的境界中拯救出来。当人们完意识到自己的无助时，并且当他们的心智足够成熟地来接受一位救世主时，他差遣他的儿子，仍然是一个上帝且与父本为一，进入这个世界，由圣灵降下，取了最纯洁无玷的人类之女儿的内躯，即永贞玛利亚。他变成了一个人，除了无罪之外，其它都与我们无异。

他来到我们中间的目的是要把我们从魔鬼的奴役与罪恶的桎梏中释放出来，并把人类引入灵命更新的途径上，带回到上帝面前，蒙受永远的福泽。



的黑暗与无止境的苦难之地。它变得如此可怕以致于堕落的天使他们自己，恶魔或者魔鬼，也害怕它，并希望逃离它，如逃离监狱。¹

魔鬼不满足于在纯洁灵魂世界里已造成的悲剧，也不满足于它自己建立的王国。因为它憎恨上帝以及上帝所创造的一切，于是它决定把邪恶带给上帝所创造的万物之王，即阿达穆（亚当）。为了这个目的他假扮成一条毒蛇的样子然后引诱阿达穆与夏娃（厄娃）违犯上帝的戒律，通过偷吃禁果²。他是一个巧妙的诱惑者；他确信如果他们吃了识别善恶树的果实，他们将变得无所不知与强大，就像上帝。他曾经欺骗自己的想法欺骗了他们：在没有创造者的前提下，可能突然变成像上帝一样，甚至能与创造者相抗衡。因此，人类因毁灭路西法的罪恶而同样遭到毁灭：这罪就是傲慢与自恋。

这样，罪恶的悲剧从天使的世界里传递到我们的物质世界，结果我们的俗世的生命里充满矛盾，悲伤和堕落。由于堕落，阿达穆与上帝失去了他们的关系；他们被剥夺了他们在天堂里的生命，然后变成凡人。最糟糕的是，罪恶的传播，就像液体从一个被污染过的源泉中流出来，传递到他们的后代子孙，以致从此以后所有的人类与生俱来就有罪的天性。阿达穆与夏娃的后代，倾向于罪恶，采取最容易的方法，然后开始干各种邪恶的事情，伤害，欺骗甚至互相残杀。这种罪孽深重的生活

¹ 路喀福音 / 路加 8:31

² 起源之书 / 创 3



世界。那里所有理性的人们受到他们创造者给予生命之光的启明，不断地注视着他荣美以及喜悦于他无穷的慈悯。

上帝为这个物质世界创造出了善良，生命与幸福，但是罪恶却歪曲并腐化了这个形象。

罪恶来自哪里？

《圣经》告诉我们在人类出现之前，或许在宏观的宇宙世界形成之前，悲剧就已在神灵的世界产生蔓延。上帝创造其中最高的天使之一，路西法或称为晨星，因骄傲而变得自我膨胀，结果他认为他是所有天使中最聪明，最强大而且最漂亮的，以致他不再需要他的创造者，并没有义务为他服务。路西法的目标就是使自己成为上帝的一种，成为其他天使崇拜的对象。在这之后他在天堂上发动了反叛并赢得了天使世界里某一部分叛逆天使的支持。就这样，路西法之后被称为撒旦，或者魔鬼（意思是指诋毁），正是最罪恶，骄傲，自满的始作俑者，是其他一切罪恶与堕落的基础。路西法试图建立一个脱离于上帝之外的「自由」与「独立」精神的国。但是这个国度，建立在罪恶的基础上，是肯定会失败的，也就是人所共知的地狱或者无底洞。而不是光明灿烂的天堂，它成了一个不可测知



原来世界上最大的矛盾在于我们自身。我们自然界有某些方面不是按照物质世界的规律去思索和感知的，而是依据某种精神理念。这是为什么人类从来不与毁灭与死亡这两个事实妥协的原因。他们常常保留那些不自然与无法接受的事情。也许没有想过这个问题的每个人，想要住在一个没有矛盾的世界，一个和谐与公平规则的世界，一个欢乐不因悲痛而黯淡的世界，一个生命无终止的世界。

是否如某个哲学家宣称的（如柏拉图，他的世界观），我们的灵魂曾经停留在其他某个更好的世界，那里充满着和谐，然后灵魂不按它自己的意愿陷入这个不完美的世界，因此它潜意识地渴望着理想的世界？这种可能性是令人神往的，它可能部分地解释为什么人类感觉不满足，但是它难道不只是一个梦吗？

信仰存在于上帝，在于他的无限仁慈与力量，向我们暗示了他使我们幸福。正是上帝给予了我们完美和获得幸福难以抑制的欲望。因此，必然存在另一个世界，一个比我们更好更完美的世界。但是它在哪里而且我们如何到达它呢？

基督教能给予这个最重要且不断受到质疑的问题清晰而精准的回答。它毫不含糊地断言确实存在另外一个更好的世界，称之为天堂或者天国，天使与正义的灵魂居住在那里。它是一个没有矛盾与不公平的世界；也没有罪恶、暴力、疾病与死亡。这是一个总是有着永无止境的生命的生命以及和谐的



影响；因疾病我们无法去完成我们既定的活动。这样看来，世界上是没有什么事情是可靠与永恒不变的了。名誉不会永存。财富从我们手指间悄然溜走。幸福的稍纵即逝以及随之而来的长久空虚与毫无目标。外在的物质使人厌倦。朋友欺骗我们。爱人出卖我们的信任。梦想无法成真。短暂的喜悦之后随之而来的是空洞与不满。年轻被老龄替代。死亡出现在人的每个年龄阶段，将人类的希望和计划化为泡影。

世界对立与矛盾的原因是什么呢？为什么世界看起来是一只手给予，不料又从另一只手又夺回呢？为什么它建立了却又拆毁呢？是否有可能它给予我们快乐的时光只是为了使我们以后的时光更失望痛苦呢？是否世界吸引我们只是为了打击我们？是否它给予我们生命的快乐只是为了过后残忍地以死亡让我们悲痛呢？

此外，如果世界按照它的自然的二元性，就象原子粒子的正负电荷，那么为什么我们人类，作为世界有机体的一部分，不能使我们自己与这二元性协调，反而要渴望完全的和諧与有秩序？即使死亡与衰败如生命与发展一样自然时，为什么在我们的内心对生命与无限的快乐有如此炽热的渴望？而且，不管我们怎么告诉自己多少次有一天我们所有人都将死去，而且死亡是每种生物的自然终结，对这种想法我们有一种根深蒂固的潜意识地抵抗；我们要求生命的延续，即便当生命与难以置信的努力与苦难连系时。



悲剧

我们世界的两面性

从早期的孩童时期，我们常常要面对一个不愉快的事实——我们所居住的世界是两面的，是对立矛盾的。

一方面，世界是宏伟与美丽的。我们为自然界的美丽、广阔以及它的亲切所陶醉。生活以它的神秘与无限的可能召唤我们。有时我们感觉在我们的内心有着强大的精力与能力。我们认为万事万物是为了我们的幸福，快乐和进步而被设立的。

与此同时，我们一直要面对另一个事实——很多存在于这个世界上的许多美好的事物却是以毁灭和死亡而告终。自然界有暴风雨，地震，干旱与瘟疫，植物与动物因此而受损害甚至死亡。在人类社会，我们看到欺骗、纠纷、抢劫、暴力与战争。在家庭里，我们看到敌意与争吵。甚至在我们自己内心也常常感到烦躁与不安。我们因疑惑而倍受困扰；我们由于意想不到的麻烦与失望而受到







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联系电话：+852 9438 5021

传真：+852 2290 9125

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传真：+1-763-431-0511

e-mail: mitrophan@orthodox.cn

网页：http://orthodox.cn





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什么是最重要的

作者：大司祭弗列比德弗和修道院长
亚历山大

梁家荣 中译

香港圣彼得圣保罗教堂
正教會中華諸聖會
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集揚宣信正

什么是最重要的



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