

The Orthodox Teaching on Personal Salvation

Chapter 1

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FOREWORD

I was prompted to choose this particular topic for the present Thesis by my apologetical dialogue in the Apologetics class. When my opponent – a Presbyterian pastor – and I got into the discussion of the subject of personal salvation and went through the usual set of Biblical quotes that the two sides read differently, I felt that it was important to emphasize that the Orthodox and the Protestant teachings on salvation do not exactly carry the same weight, as the Protestant teaching of “faith only” happens to be a 16th-century novelty that was born out of the protest against the abuses of the Papacy. Neither the Apostles, nor the Eastern Fathers, nor the Latin Fathers taught about salvation this way.

To my surprise, this statement made an impression on my opponent. He said that he does have a problem with this fact, that this is something he is “wrestling with”, and that he even finds it “troubling.” Another admission that he made was that he (in spite of his being a pastor and a seminary graduate, I would add) never questioned the Protestant views on salvation and never had to deal with the opposing views of the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Churches.

This turn in our dialogue made me also realize that it is not only important for us Orthodox to be able to explain what we believe but also to expose our opponents and listeners to our approach to the Christian faith in general and theology in particular – that delegitimizes the approaches of the non-Orthodox denominations and individuals and makes their interpretation of particular Biblical quotes largely irrelevant.

Simply put, our teaching on salvation cannot be reduced to a set of Scriptural or Patristic quotes that we just happen to read in a certain way. Our teaching on salvation can be traced back to the early Apostolic Church through the uninterrupted continuity of worship and practice, of the life of the Church. In other words, our doctrine of salvation is embodied by the life that the Church has lived since the times of Christ and the Apostles.

This doctrine is multi-dimensional, and involves dogmatic, historical, Scriptural, ecclesiological, and other aspects. Likewise, the criticism of non-Orthodox doctrines of personal salvation can also be offered from

multiple points of view. The present work is an apologetical exercise aimed at outlining this logic, interconnectedness, and complexity to a non-Orthodox Christian believer.

As was already mentioned, the idea here is to present the Orthodox teaching on personal salvation as something that can be mostly drawn directly from the abundant Scriptural, Apostolic, and Patristic evidence and stand by itself, as opposed to the more common approach of being drawn out of the opposition to the Roman Catholic/Protestant teaching (and “beating Catholics with Protestant arguments, and Protestants with Catholic arguments”).

INTRODUCTION: OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE SALVATION

“The dogma of salvation in Christ is the central dogma of Christianity, the heart of our Christian faith.”[\[1\]](#)

We call Christ Himself our “Savior” and in our Symbol of Faith we confess our belief in “One Lord Jesus Christ... Who for us men and *for our salvation* [\[2\]](#) came down from the heavens and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried...”. By these words the Orthodox Church teaches that the salvation of the human race is achieved by the Son of God, Lord Jesus Christ, Who said about Himself, “the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45).[\[3\]](#), [\[4\]](#)

Why do we call Christ “the Savior”? Likewise, we can also ask: what is salvation? Salvation from what? If we are talking about salvation, someone must be in danger. The answers that the Orthodox Church gives to these questions are tied to the Orthodox teaching about the “original sin” and its consequences. “The doctrine of original sin has great significance in the Christian world-view, because upon it rests a whole series of other dogmas.”[\[5\]](#)

From the beginning, the Church’s teaching has been that the nature of man was profoundly corrupted as a result of the fall. Adam and Eve sinned by violating God’s order and breaking their connection with God – Who alone is Life. “The breaking of this communion with God can be consummated only in death, because nothing created can continue indefinitely to exist of itself. Thus, by the transgression of the first man, the principle of “sin (the devil) entered into the world and through sin death, and so death passed upon all men...”[see Romans 5:12].”[\[6\]](#) Our nature was damaged and became completely dislocated. Our wholesome essence got split into three parts – mind, heart, and body – that got in conflict with each other. We inherit that damaged nature, with its *pre-disposition to sin*. “Original sin is understood by Orthodox theology as a sinful inclination which has entered into mankind and become its spiritual disease.”[\[7\]](#), [\[8\]](#)

“...With the transgression of the commandment, the principle of sin immediately entered into man – “the law of sin”... It struck the very nature of man and quickly began to root itself in him and develop. ... The sinful inclinations in man have taken the reigning position; man has become the servant of sin (Rom. 6:7). Both the mind and the feelings have become darkened in him, and therefore his moral freedom often does not incline towards the good, but towards evil.”[\[9\]](#) This damage “was transmitted to [Adam’s] descendants and weighs upon them.”[\[10\]](#) We are not *guilty* of Adam’s sin (as Western soteriology puts it) but still have to deal with its consequences, as it affected the whole of mankind.

This understanding of Adam’s sin *as damage* has deep implications for our understanding of what Christ has done for us, because otherwise one could ask: why couldn’t a loving God just forgive the sin of Adam? Why did Christ need to come? The Patristic answer to this is that the “original damage” cannot be “forgiven” – it can only be *cured!* Adam and Eve repented – however, “repentance [does not] recall men from what is according to their nature; all that it does is to make them cease from sinning” (St. Athanasius the Great, “On the Incarnation”).[\[11\]](#)

Christ did not make us sinless, as there is still sin in the world, even after the Resurrection of Christ. He delivered us from the *power* of sin, from pre-disposition to sin that man was unable to reverse by himself.

The Holy Fathers say that Christ assumed the perfect nature (of Adam before fall) but with all the deficiencies (afflictions) caused by the fall. “The Divine essence, as fleshless, does not partake in suffering. But since it was His Body that got subjected to all these sufferings, we say that the Word was suffering for us, because He Who is without passion was in a suffering body” (St. Cyril of Alexandria).[12] Christ restored our human essence *in Himself*. “Jesus Christ, by uniting humankind and God in His own person, reopened for us humans the path to union with God. In His Own person Christ showed what the true “likeness to God” is, and through His redeeming and victorious sacrifice He set that likeness once again within our reach.”[13] This is how the Church has always understood salvation delivered to us by Jesus Christ.

However, the word “salvation” is used in the Scripture with two different meanings.

“In the preaching of the Apostles, especially worthy of attention is the fact that they precisely teach us to distinguish between the truth of the salvation of mankind as a whole, which has already been accomplished, and another truth – the necessity for a personal reception and assimilation of the gift of salvation on the part of each of the faithful, and the fact that this latter salvation depends upon each one himself. *Ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*, writes the Apostle Paul (Eph. 2:8); but he also teaches, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling* (Phil. 2:12).[14]

“Our *objective* salvation is realized only in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, whereas our *personal* or *subjective* salvation, which in the language of the New Testament is called “righteousness”, “holiness”, or “salvation” (in the narrow sense), is realized as a continuance of this objective salvation, with our personal energy or activity acting in co-operation with Divine Energy or Grace.”[15]

It is the Orthodox teaching of personal (subjective) salvation that we intend to outline in the present work.

CHAPTER 1. THE ORTHODOX TEACHING ON PERSONAL SALVATION

1.1 Personal salvation is the restoration of our original communion with God.

The Orthodox teaching on personal salvation is based on the teaching on the purpose of God’s creation of man and the damage suffered by human nature as a result of the “original sin.” God created man “in His Image and His likeness” (Genesis 1:26) – that is, God intended man to be *god by grace*. “The loss of the Kingdom of God was the most severe consequence of the fall. Adam and Eve lost blessedness that they had already tasted in Paradise.”[16] “After his first fall, man *himself* departed in soul from God and became unreceptive to the grace of God which was opened to him; he ceased to listen to the divine voice addressed to him, and this led to the further deepening of sin in him.”[17]

Salvation is the restoration of the wholeness of God’s image in us, of the possibility of our union with God. It is *the restoration of our original essence*. “Holy Tradition teaches that... we will be saved when we become *like Christ*... Because of our faith in Him and our desire to become God-like, we are not so much saved all at once as slowly changed into the creatures **we were created to be**.”[18]

1.2 Everyone is called to salvation.

Salvation is not for the “elect”, or “chosen people”. God “will have **all men** to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Furthermore, “in **every** nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:35). Christ said: “I... will draw **all men** unto me” (John 12:32). He “died for **all**, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again...” (2 Corinthians 5:15). From Christ the Apostles “have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among **all** nations...” (Romans 1:5). With the Apostles “we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of **all men**, specially of those that believe” (1 Timothy 4:10).

1.3 Personal salvation is a process.

There is a multitude of places in the Scripture testifying to the fact that salvation is not a single act but extended in time: “He that endureth to the end **shall be saved**” (Matthew 10:22), “To us who are **being saved**” (1 Corinthians 1:18), etc. Christ Himself indicates that salvation is a life-long journey: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Apostle Paul exhorts the Phillippians to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12).

One can get closer to or farther from salvation: “...Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Romans 13:11). Striving to become righteous, one can progress through various degrees: “...Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).^[19] Christ links entering the kingdom of heaven – that is, eternal salvation – to the level of righteousness one is able to acquire.

“...Our Church, however, teaches that our personal salvation is neither a gift, nor a simple work, but rather a process and an undertaking that matures or develops gradually and is realized in the cooperation of two persons: God and man.”^[20]

1.4 The essence and the goal of personal salvation is deification (*theosis*).

This process of the restoration of our original communion with God *is* our “personal salvation”. As Christians, we seek not simply blessings from God but *God Himself* – and our salvation is the experiential knowledge of God. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). “...The knowledge of God and eternal salvation... are inseparable from each other” (St. Clement of Alexandria, “The Stromata”).^[21]

Growing in the knowledge of God, in communion with God, one becomes more and more *deified* – “in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christian believers and transforms them into the image of God in Christ, eventually endowing them in the resurrection with immortality and God’s perfect moral character.”^[22]

Compared to the multitude of terms that the New Testament uses as synonyms for “salvation” – “redemption”, “reconciliation”, “adoption”, “justification”, etc. – a later Patristic term *theosis* seems to best encompass the most important aspects of it.

There is an abundance of Scriptural and Patristic evidence showing that the Church has always believed in the possibility of our *theosis* and has seen it as the means of our salvation. “When Christ said, “Repent, for the **Kingdom of Heaven** is at hand (Matthew 4:17),” this is a call to a life of Theosis.”^[23] “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19). “He, indeed, assumed humanity that we may **become God**” (St. Athanasius of Alexandria, “On the Incarnation”).^[24] “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4). “Since the Lord thus has redeemed us through His own blood, giving His soul for our souls, and His flesh for our flesh, and has also poured out the Spirit of the Father for the union and communion of God and man, imparting indeed God to men by means of the Spirit, and, on the other hand, **attaching man to God** by His own incarnation, and bestowing upon us at His coming immortality durably and truly, **by means of communion with God...**” (St. Irenaeus of Lyons, “Against Heresies”, Book 5, 1:1).^[25] “(Christ) will have with us such a unity by grace as He Himself with the Father by nature... That glory that the Father gave to the Son, the Son gives to us as well by grace... Having once become our relative by flesh and **having made us partakers of His Divinity**, He (by that) made us His relatives... We have such a unity with Christ... that a husband has with his wife and wife with the husband” (St. Symeon the New Theologian).^[26]

“St. Maximus the Confessor says: “Strong and sure basis of the hope for deification of man’s essence is God’s becoming man, which makes man god in the same measure as God Himself became man. For it is clear that He who became man without sin, can deify the (human) essence without turning into Divinity, having lifted it up to Himself in the same measure, in which He humbled Himself for man.” St. Maximus refers to God as “desiring salvation and hungering for deification” of men. By His immeasurable love for man Christ ascended Golgotha and suffered death on the Cross, which reconciled and united man to God.”[\[27\]](#)

It is important to emphasize that, according to the Patristic teaching on *theosis*, the human person is not getting absorbed, or “swallowed”, by Divinity. In His “High Priest’s prayer”, Jesus Christ prays to God the Father about His followers that “they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us” (John 17:21). Just as three Persons of the Holy Trinity dwell in each other without losing their individual character, we are also called to “dwell” in God without losing our identity.

Through *theosis* we, of course, do not become God *by essence* – we become God *by grace*. Our communion is with the Divine energies – that is, the manifestations of God in this world – not the essence of God.

Finally, it should be noted that, since Christ saved the whole person, our personal salvation involves *both* soul and body. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (Romans 12:1). Holiness is not just a moral perfection. Many Orthodox Saints have physically *demonstrated* the fruits of *theosis*. From the lives of the Holy Fathers of the early Church we know many examples of visible, bodily signs accompanying *theosis* – like uncreated light (“the light of Tabor”) surrounding the living Saints. The bodies of some Saints have been miraculously preserved from corruption. In Mark 17 Christ lists the outward signs that will accompany those who will have achieved *theosis*.

1.5 Personal salvation is both in the future and now.

In accordance with the teaching on salvation as *theosis*, the Church has always understood salvation as something that starts and can be already experienced in our earthly life. Christ Himself referred to salvation in present tense: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21) – and assured that “there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the **kingdom of God** come with power” (Mark 9:1). One can say that “we are gradually saved as we are deified, by doing Christ’s teaching and His commandments.”[\[28\]](#)

The writings of Apostle St. John the Theologian are especially full of references to eternal life as something already present: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36). “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life...” (John 6:54). “We know that we have passed from death unto life...” (1 John 3:14). “...And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him...” (1 John 3:15). Etc.

Since eternal life is communion with God, the presence of God in us, “it does not have in its essence anything that would prevent its revelation here on Earth; in other words, eternal life – as a state of a human soul – does not depend on the conditions of space and time, does not belong only to the world beyond the grave, but depends exclusively on one’s moral development, and thus, for the elect, can begin in this life.”[\[29\]](#)

We are not laboring for some future reward, since “for anyone longing for truth and life, that very truth and that very life *are* the reward; because it was for them that he was laboring.”[\[30\]](#)

One can find a complete Patristic consensus on understanding of our spiritual life as a development that starts here on Earth and continues in the afterlife. Eternal salvation is not something qualitatively new – but a full revelation of what was sown by one in his earthly spiritual struggle. A great ascetic of the 4th century, St. Macarius the Great, who had tasted communion with God in his earthly life, was so permeated

with that experience, that he almost could not imagine what else could be given to his soul beyond the grave^[31] and was inclined to believe that on the day of Resurrection it will be just the body that “will be covered and glorified with the Light of God that there is in the human soul **now** – so that the body could reign with the soul, even **now** partaking in the Kingdom of Christ, consoled and enlightened by the eternal light” (St. Macarius the Great, Discourse 2, “On the Kingdom of Darkness”).^[32]

Jumping slightly ahead, we will add, that, it is in the nature of the Church in general to be simultaneously the preparation for the future (eternal life) and already the fulfillment, the foretaste of it: “On the one hand, the Church herself *is* preparation: she “prepares” us for life eternal. Thus her function is to transform our whole life into preparation. By her preaching, doctrine and prayer she constantly reveals to us that the ultimate “value” which gives meaning and direction to our lives is at the “end”, is “to come”, is to be hoped for, expected, anticipated. . . . Yet, on the other hand, the Church is also and essentially *fulfillment*. The events which gave her birth and which constitute the very source of her faith and life have taken place. Christ has come. In Him man was deified and has ascended to heaven. The Holy Spirit has come and His coming has inaugurated the Kingdom of God. Grace has been given and the Church truly is “heaven on earth”, for in her we have access to Christ’s table in His Kingdom. **We have received the Holy Spirit and can partake, here and now, of the new life and be in communion with God.**”^[33]

1.6 Faith is a starting point of one’s personal salvation.

How does one embark on the journey of *theosis*? First, he needs his will to be awakened to the desire to be with God. *Faith* is what awakes it. Faith is a driving force and the “heart” of one’s spiritual life. How does one get it? God gives faith to those who seek Him. One has to be a seeker of the truth, attentive to his conscience and checking it against the law known to him. Seeing that “spark of seeking”, God will always help.

Without faith in Christ, one cannot be saved because He does not know that God is all-forgiving Love. Knowing himself to be a sinner who deserves punishment, he sees God as an all-powerful, hostile, and unmerciful ruler of the Universe. In this state, being frightened of God and awaiting punishment, one simply cannot spontaneously turn to love for Him – without which there is no salvation. “How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed?” (Romans 10:14).^[34] One cannot learn that God is a merciful, loving Father because “no man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). One can only learn that God is Love because “the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18). Through faith in Christ one gets “boldness and access [to God] with confidence” (Ephesians 3:12). And, seeing that God is a loving Father, one begins to long for Him and love Him in return. Only through faith one can call God “my God” – that is, freely associating oneself with God. Thus through faith a close personal union is established between a believer and God. “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (1 John 4:15).

The Holy Scripture and the early Church Fathers are absolutely clear on this importance of faith as an outset of one’s journey towards salvation: “He that **believeth** and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that **believe** on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). “Without **faith** it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must **believe** that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man **believeth** unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever **believeth** on him shall not be ashamed. . . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:9-13). “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and **believe** the gospel” (Mark 1:15). “...And so we, having been called through His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works which we wrought in holiness of heart, but through **faith**, whereby the Almighty God justified all men that have been from the beginning. . . .” (St. Clement, “First Epistle to Corinthians”).^[35]

Reading the above quotes, one can ask, though: is faith all that is needed for salvation? Here it is important to note that there are two parallel narratives both in the Holy Scripture, and in the Patristic works: one gives an impression of salvation through “saving faith”, and the other preaches the importance of *works* in addition to faith. In every case one has to be careful and should try to understand what each writer was talking about and whom he was addressing.

In the early Church, “faith” meant the entire lifestyle of a believer – as opposed to remaining a pagan or a Jew. Good deeds were taken as an integral part of such “faith”. On the other hand, when talking specifically about “faith” *and* “works”, an Apostle or a Holy Father most often desired to stress that “cold faith” – that is, being a Christian in name only, for social, familial or other reasons – could not save one: one actually has to “work out his salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). Thus both narratives – “faith” and “faith *and* works” – are consistent with each other.

In addition to a subjective spiritual experience, “faith” is understood by the Church also as “a *doctrine* to be followed, that is, the entire content of Christ’s instruction to the Apostles (Mt. 28:20), “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3): the teachings of the Church. To believe in Christ as Savior and God is to also believe all that He taught. In other words, the Orthodox say that faith is not merely “that we believe” but “what we believe”^[36]

Simply confessing Christ as Lord does not earn you salvation: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”(Matthew 7:21). Demons are not saved, even though they have faith too: “...The devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19) – and even confess Christ: “A certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:16-17).

1.7 Repentance is a necessary condition of one’s personal salvation.

Thus faith is only the beginning. “Faith only reveals to one the truth that for his prior sins God will not punish him, that, on the opposite, He is ready to accept him and pardon him and recognize him as His son. But this... only clears for one the path to God but does not do anything with him. Before that he was afraid to turn to God, but now he got to know God and stopped fearing Him, and, on the opposite, grew to love Him. But he is still the same man. It is necessary for him not just to begin loving God but actively, really turn to Him.”^[37]

In order to believe *truly*, it is necessary for one to understand the magnitude of his sins forgiven by God, to realize that he is a sinner worthy of death. One can only have true love for God when he realizes the true horror of his sins that God forgave him for free. This state – *repentance* – can even be called “the *beginning* of faith.” Without judging himself, one will not ask God for forgiveness – and without asking for forgiveness, one will not receive it and thus will not be saved. One’s return to God starts with repentance. Seeing it, God, like the father in the parable of prodigal son, runs to meet us: “when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him” (Luke 15:20).

Faith accompanied by repentance – “the faith of the Wise Thief”^[38] – is thus the true faith that saves. Christ expects repentance from His followers: “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:13). And He makes it clear that the possibility of one’s salvation is tied to his repentance: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent** ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent**, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou **repent**” (Revelation 2:5). Furthermore, resistance to the Truth once it is known to one – that is, the *lack* of repentance – is something with which salvation becomes impossible: “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Matthew 12:31).

True repentance – the ability to see the depth of one’s sins – is the foundation of the entire “building” of Christian life, which is humility (“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”), the realization that one cannot rid himself of his sins without Christ. The Holy Fathers agree on the primacy of humility in one’s spiritual life. We can note here that Adam had all gifts of God but he did not have experience of humility.[\[39\]](#)

1.8 Baptism is the gateway on one’s path to salvation.

Repentance is still not sufficient for salvation. One needs to reject the old life of sin and start the new life. But one cannot be born into the new life spontaneously, as he will keep coming back to his old life. So we need the grace of God to finish what we cannot finish by ourselves. “For he that intends to pursue virtue ought to condemn wickedness first, and then go in pursuit of it. For repentance cannot prove²⁸⁷⁰ δεῖξαι them [the Hebrews] clean. For this cause they were straightway baptized, that what they were unable to accomplish by themselves, this might be effected by the grace of Christ. Neither then does repentance suffice for purification, but **men must first receive baptism**” (St. John Chrysostom, “Homilies of the Epistle to the Hebrews”, Homily 9, “On Hebrews 6:1-3”).[\[40\]](#)

The early Apostolic and Patristic Church was absolutely clear that baptism was essential for one’s salvation, as Christ Himself said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). In His dialogue with Nicodemus, “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God**. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be **born again**.” (John 3:3-7)

This quote has been the basis of the Orthodox belief about **the necessity of baptism for one’s salvation**. In Chapter 13 of his “On Baptism,” Tertullian proves that salvation through pure faith (“thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:22, Mark 10:52, etc.)) only existed before the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. Then Christ imposed the law of baptism, saying, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19). Christ’s definition of John 3:5 “...**has tied faith to the necessity of baptism**. Accordingly, all thereafter who became believers used to be baptized. Then it was, too, that Paul, when he believed, was baptized; and this is the meaning of the precept which the Lord had given him when smitten with the plague of loss of sight, saying, “Arise, and enter Damascus; there shall be demonstrated to thee what thou oughtest to do,” to wit—be baptized, which was the only thing lacking to him. That point excepted, he had sufficiently learnt and believed “the Nazarene” to be “the Lord, the Son of God””.[\[41\]](#)

Since the earliest times, the Church has believed in the saving, redemptive action of baptism. “Baptism doth also now **save us**” (1 Peter 3:21). “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). “We enter, then, the font once: once are sins washed away.”[\[42\]](#) It, perhaps, goes without saying, that the Church has never believed in the “magical” powers of baptism. The condition for receiving the forgiveness of one’s sins in baptism is his free desire to stop the old life of sin (that is, repentance.) The visible form (immersion) is the symbol of the rejection of that old life.

It is also important to emphasize that baptism has never been seen as a “legal” act of giving the pardon of sins committed. In baptism, one’s sins are not just forgiven by God but *erased*. The early Church believed in the **regenerative power** of baptism: “According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of **regeneration**, and **renewing** of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5). In his First Apology, St. Justin the Martyr describes the early-Church rite of baptism: the new converts “are brought by us where there is water, and are **regenerated** in the same manner in which we were ourselves **regenerated**... In order that we... may **obtain in the water the remission of sins** formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be **born again**, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe”

(Chapter 61).[\[43\]](#) In general, a complete destruction of one's sins is the only form of forgiveness of sins known to Christianity.[\[44\]](#)

Having developed the *longing* for God through faith, one truly unites to Christ only in baptism. The Church has always understood baptism as death and Resurrection with Christ: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3-4). The new life that one receives in baptism is a mystical union with Christ that Christ Himself likened to one between the branches and the grapevine: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:5-6). In baptism one truly accepts Christ into himself, as a way of life, becomes Christ's, "puts on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Justification that one receives in baptism is Christ Himself (St. Macarius the Great).[\[45\]](#) Baptism restores the original predisposition of the human soul and human nature in general.[\[46\]](#)

1.9 Personal salvation requires a sustained effort even after baptism.

The Holy Fathers taught that the grace of justification that one receives in baptism is, in a way, temporary – and can be lost.[\[47\]](#) The seed of the new life received in baptism, "the firstfruits of the Spirit" (Romans 8:23), may remain without fruit in the life of a lazy Christian – just like the talent from the parable of talents (Matthew 25:14-30) or the seed from the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-8) that did not fall into good ground.

In baptism our sins are washed away, but we do not become sinless. Through our weaknesses sins find their way back into our life. Having now Christ in us – Who has ended the dominance of sin over the powers of our soul – we nonetheless have to keep fighting the remnants of our sinful habits. It is not enough to simply reject our old sinful life: it has to be completely eradicated. Our salvation will become eternal if we erase from ourselves the very *possibility* of sin.[\[48\]](#) Likewise, we will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven if we remain satisfied with the grace of justification we received in our baptism and do not seek to increase it. For this reason we have the command of the Apostle to "quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). We should not stop "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13) – in other words, we should not stop until we are *deified*.

The teaching of the Church about spiritual life as a continuing effort has a solid basis in the words of Christ Himself – Who said: "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). "From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12). "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23-24).

1.10 Personal salvation is acquired through fulfilling Christ's commandments.

What plan should one follow in his continuing spiritual struggle after baptism? The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11) lay out this process in general. There is also a branch of Patristic teaching – called *ascetics* – and an abundance of texts that offer a more detailed plan. The ascetic Fathers have identified eight main sinful dispositions of soul – called *passions* – and the stages through which they take possession of one's soul. Based on their personal experience, these Fathers also developed comprehensive methods of combating each passion and planting in one's soul a virtue opposite to it.[\[49\]](#)

While the overview of the ascetic teaching goes beyond the scope of the present work, we will only stress that the early Apostolic and Patristic Church never looked at one's struggle to fulfill Christ's Commandments – *works*, in traditional terminology – as the means to *earn* salvation. In fact, the Church

has always taught that we cannot fulfill any Commandment perfectly. Saints would weep over their virtues for this reason. But then why is trying to keep the Commandments important? Because it opens for one the real picture of himself – the state of that “original damage” that we inherited from Adam. As St. Peter of Damascus said, “the first sign of the beginning of the health of the soul is seeing your sins innumerable as sea sand.”[\[50\]](#)

In other words, in Orthodoxy our good works are looked at as means of *getting to know ourselves*. Forcing oneself to diligently keep Christ’s Commandments leads one to humility. And this is where salvation begins. This is when one realizes that he needs Christ – as one would realize that he is sick and needs a physician. According to the Holy Fathers, before you realize who you really are you cannot even be called a Christian.

Seeing how afflicted you are is what puts you before Christ. This is why our works matter! They are not “merits”, they do not *earn* us anything – but they are the means of learning the truth about ourselves that leads us to true faith in Christ.

In general, God is seeking in us the ability to accept communion with Him – and readily gives it to us in proportion with our ability to accept.[\[51\]](#) This ability is what matters. This is why even those who did not have a chance to be baptized (e.g., Christian martyrs, or the Wise Thief) can still get into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is the zeal towards good that makes us the members of the Kingdom of Heaven and gives us the ability to accept holiness. It is the disposition of one’s soul that counts: the desire of the Kingdom of Christ. If one is “poor in Spirit” and truly longs for God, salvation will be his, even if he has not done enough good deeds. “It is not those who work that are saved but those who spiritually are always with God, who live for God.”[\[52\]](#)

It is through keeping the Commandments that the virtues are planted in our souls. Our life on Earth can thus be viewed as the time we have for the “upbringing” of our soul and creating in it the disposition that allows us communion with God. Christ does not need the *actions* that we perform when we keep His Commandments, He does not need our suffering – what He needs is the internal *state of our soul* that manifests itself when we, for example, turn the other cheek to our offender. “My son, give me thine heart” (Proverbs 23:26).[\[53\]](#)

Understood this way, the importance of *works* for one’s salvation finds abundant support in the Holy Scripture.

Christ Himself said: “If a man love me, he will **keep my words**: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). The necessity of works is further illustrated in the following passage: to the man who asked “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”, Jesus says what he needs *to do* – and this is not just to have faith or be baptized: “go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:17-21).

Jesus Christ will judge people based on what they have *done* and *not done*, not whether they believed – “I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in”, etc. Those who have not done these things will “go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal” (Matthew 25:31-46). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth** the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). The judgment will be according to one’s works – not faith or membership in the Church: “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, **according to that he hath done**, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). “He shall reward every man **according to his works**” (Matthew 16:27). “The righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man **according to his deeds**” (Romans 2:5-6). “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**. And the sea gave up the dead

which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man **according to their works**" (Revelation 20:12-13).

There can be found even a few Old Testament quotes about redemption (forgiveness of sins) *as a result of* works: "Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins" (Sirach 3:30). "For alms doth deliver from death, and shall purge away all sin" (Tobit 12:9).

And, of course, there is a strong Patristic consensus pointing to the necessity of works for one's salvation.

In the 2nd-century text "The Shepherd" by Hermas^[54], that even enjoyed the status of Scripture in some parts of the early Church, here are the commandments given to the author by the Divine visitor ("the Shepherd"): "Abstain not from any good works, but do them. Hear, he said, what the virtue of those good works is **which you must do, that you may be saved**. The first of all is faith and the fear of the Lord, then charity, concord, equity, truth, patience, and chastity" (Part II, "Commands", Command 8, Verse 8). Interestingly, faith is mentioned in this list as one of the works. "But now I say to you, **if you will not observe these commands, but will neglect them, you will not be saved**" (Part II, "Commands", Command 12, Verse 16). Neglecting the commandments will result in the loss of salvation.

St. Clement of Rome, in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians^[55] writes: "Let us clothe ourselves in concord, being lowly-minded and temperate, holding ourselves aloof from all back biting and evil speaking, being **justified by works** and not by words" (30:3). "What then must we do, brethren? Must we idly abstain from doing good, and forsake love? May the Master never allow this to befall us at least; but let us hasten with instancy and zeal to **accomplish every good work**" (33:1). "It is therefore needful that we should be zealous unto well doing, for of Him are all things: since He forewarneth us saying, Behold, the Lord, and His reward is before His face, to **recompense each man according to his work**. He exhorteth us therefore to believe on Him with our whole heart, and to be not idle nor careless unto every good work" (34:2-4).

In his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians^[56] St. Clement specifically mentions the importance of keeping Christ's Commandments: "Nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we should disobey His commandments" (Chapter 6). So does St. Polycarp of Smyrna in his Epistle to the Philippians^[57] (110-140 AD): "Now He that raised Him from the dead **will raise us also; if we do His will and walk in His commandments** and love the things which He loved, abstaining from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing or blow for blow or cursing for cursing; but remembering the words which the Lord spake, as He taught; Judge not that ye be not judged. Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you. Have mercy that ye may receive mercy" (2:2-2:3).

1.11 God does not force salvation on anyone but assists those who *choose* it.

As was already mentioned above, the Orthodox teaching on salvation is based on the doctrine of free will. In his fall man did not lose his free will. Man could still choose to be with God or without Him – he just could not move by himself back towards God, as the path was closed by the "original sin."

Christ cleared that path, and now our salvation is the matter solely of our choice. God honors our choice – whatever it is. This is the reason God does not make demons disappear: God respects their free will, as free will is a feature of divinity (that, unfortunately, can be misused.) We are saved through cooperation of our will with God's – called *synergy* in Orthodox theology – the doctrine famously expressed by St. Athanasius the Great as "God does not save us without us."^[58] Christ Himself promised His response to those seeking His help: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

On the other hand, God does not force salvation on anyone: otherwise, this would not be "salvation" but rather His re-making us into something that contradicts His Own original design of us. First He made us in

His image and now He “saves” us by taking His image away from us and essentially equating us with all other living creatures? When St. John Chrysostom was asked why not everybody is saved, he said, “Because you yourselves do not want to [be saved]. Even though the grace is indeed the grace, and it saves, but it saves only those who desire it, but not those who do not want it and turn away from it.”^[59] Likewise, the Dread Judgment is dread not because someone will be put in hell against his will – but because that will be the final *self-determination* of each human.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons, in his “Against heresies”, Book 4, Chapter 37, says that our Lord’s expression, “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37), “set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, **to obey the behests... of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God**, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually. And therefore does He give good counsel to all.”^[60] Furthermore, St. Irenaeus says, “God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle [Romans 2:4-5, 7 – V.K.], and they who work it shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good **when they had it in their power not to do it**; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good **when they had it in their power so to do**.”^[61] Obviously, the early Church believed that God’s judgment – and, as a result, the possibility of one’s salvation – is affected by what one consciously and freely does or does not do.

“The grace of God does not enslave the conscience and freedom of man – but, having revealed to him the love of God and the horror of sin, it leaves it up to man to strive towards this love and... communion with it.”^[62]

1.12 No one can ever be assured of salvation.

The early Church did not believe that baptism guarantees one salvation: “...After we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may **offer hearty prayers** in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so **that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation**.” (St. Justin the Martyr, First Apology, Chapter 65).^[63] Again, it is worth noting that the everlasting salvation is linked to one’s *works*.

Even Apostle Paul himself did not feel that his salvation was guaranteed: “...Now is our salvation **nearer** than when we believed” (Romans 13:11) – “nearer” but not a “done deal”. “So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Corinthians 9:26-27). We notice immediately that for the Apostle the possibility of his salvation was tied to his ascetic feats. “...If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended...” (Philippians 3:11-13).

The Scripture does say that it is possible for someone, after he has believed, to fall away from faith and lose his salvation: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Peter 2:20-21). This is the reason why the Church never glorifies any living person as a Saint.

Even the greatest Saints, up to their last hour, never took for granted that they were going to heaven. It was said about St. Symeon the Great, who, being on his deathbed, saw the angels come to take his soul and told his disciples that he wanted to ask the angels to give him more time because, in his opinion, *he had not*

even started to repent yet. Many Saints would repeat throughout their life the words “Everybody will be saved, I alone will perish.”[\[64\]](#)

1.13 Salvation is possible only in the Church.

“Church and sacraments are the means appointed by God whereby we may acquire the sanctifying Spirit and be transformed into the divine likeness.”[\[65\]](#)

The doctrine of the Church has been of paramount importance to Orthodox soteriology since the earliest times. Christ founded the Church (Matt. 16:17), loved it and “gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). The Church is Christ’s mystical Body (Eph. 1:23), “the pillar and the foundation of the Truth” (1 Tim. 3:15), and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The Church has been given the Truth, and it is guided by the Holy Spirit – which makes the Church infallible. One who seeks the Truth will find it by turning to the Church and submitting himself to it.

The early Church was small, visible and well-defined. To become a “Christian” meant to join that visible Church: “And the Lord added to the Church daily” (Acts 2:47). And there was a clear boundary between the Church and the rest of the world: “And of the rest durst no man join himself to them” (Acts 5:13). One would become a member of the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism, after one to three years of intense preparation – with frequent exorcisms, learning the Scripture, mastering prayer, fasting, and other aspects of spiritual life.[\[66\]](#) All of these things were possible only in the Church. It is natural that the early Church believed that “outside the Church, there is no salvation, because salvation *is* the Church” (St. Cyprian of Carthage). St. Cyprian even went as far as to say that “one cannot have God as his Father if he does not have the Church as his Mother.”[\[67\]](#)

In a purely practical sense we can view the Church as a tool that God instituted for our salvation. In the Church we can partake of the fruits of Redemption delivered to us by Christ. Having become members of the Church through baptism, we nevertheless still have the same corrupt nature, inclined towards sin (“ancestral sin”). It requires an effort on our part to stay clean after our baptism. “Even those full of the Holy Spirit have natural thoughts in them and the will to consent to them” (St. Macarius of Egypt).[\[68\]](#) The righteousness we receive in baptism is the seed of Christ, “the new Adam” – it is the opportunity to be like Christ. We need to guard that seed and let it grow. This is why we need the Mysteries (Sacraments) that the Church offers to us – most importantly, Repentance and Eucharist.

The grace of baptism lost because of sins can be restored in the Mystery of Repentance. The Church has always viewed confession of sins as “second baptism”: just like in baptism, God, seeing one’s true desire to reject sin, erases it and gives him strength to stay in this decision. This reconciliation to God is something we are called to renew again and again. In 2 Corinthians Apostle Paul, addressing the baptized Christians, says: “We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

The Sacrament of the Eucharist – “the Mystery of Mysteries”, instituted by Christ Himself at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-25) – unites us to Christ not just spiritually but bodily as well, as Christ saved not just human soul but the whole man. Christ Himself said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:53-54).

“The early Church understood the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in a literal way, preached it and wrote about it.”[\[69\]](#) “East, West, North and South—the testimony of early Christian writers is always the same: the Eucharist is literally the body and blood of Christ. Not one dissenting opinion!”[\[70\]](#) Here is one sample text from the 2nd century: “For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word,

and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh” (St. Justin the Martyr, First Apology, Chapter 66).[\[71\]](#)

The Sacrament of the Eucharist was seen as the last act finalizing one’s membership in the Church. In his First Apology, St. Justin the Martyr describes how in the early Church the “born again” (the newly baptized) were immediately led into the assembly to participate in the Eucharist with everyone else (Chapter 65).[\[72\]](#)

The Church believes that a parable of Christ, “The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened” (Matthew 13:33), refers to the mysterious transformation of man and his communion with the Holy Spirit that happens in the Church through the Mysteries. Just like leaven makes leavened dough not instantly, the new person is created not instantly, not magically. As was already mentioned above about baptism, the Church has never believed in the “magic” action of the Holy Mysteries. “According to your faith be it unto you” (Matthew 9:29). Faith, self-examination, and repentance are still required in order for them to have a salvific effect. It is possible that some believers partake in them unworthily: “... Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Corinthians 27:30).

The Church is also the keeper of the tradition of personal salvation, “the life in Christ.” All the Holy Fathers that we have quoted so far are considered the Teachers of the Church not because they were the most learned and knowledgeable but because they were *holy* – that is, they, through the life of asceticism, repentance and prayer, cleansed themselves from their sinful passions and reached *theosis*. The example of such life was given to the Church by Christ Himself.

1.14 Christ’s life on Earth is an example of personal salvation for us to follow.

“We know that Jesus Christ did not bring to us just a teaching, and that the job of the Apostles and the Church was not only to listen to the discourses of Jesus Christ and then pass them in their literal precision from generation to generation: for this purpose the best means is not an oral Tradition but some stone tablets. We know that Jesus Christ brought to us first and foremost a new life and taught it the Apostles, and that the task of the Church Tradition is not just to convey the teaching, but to pass from generation to generation this very life conceived with Christ, to pass that which one cannot be passed by any word, any writing, but only through direct personal interaction.”[\[73\]](#)

Christ said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). And in His Own person Christ showed us salvation – that is, “what the true “likeness to God” is...”[\[74\]](#)

[Go to Chapter 2](#)

[Deacon Victor E. Klimenko, Ph.D](#)

12 мая 2011 г.

Рейтинг: 1.5 Голосов: 2 Оценка: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

[\[1\]](#) Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky. *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology: A Concise Exposition* (Platina, CA: Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1984), 195.

[\[2\]](#) Unless stated otherwise, all italicizing and highlighting is mine – V.K.

[3] Unless a part of another quote, all Scriptural quotations are taken from the King James Version.

[4] N. Uspensky, “Spasenie veroi” (“Salvation through Faith”), <http://www.golubinski.ru/academia/uspensky/spasenie.htm>.

[5] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 160.

[6] John S. Romanides, “Original Sin According to Saint Paul”, http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/frjr_sin.aspx.

[7] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 163-164.

[8] More often one can see the term “ancestral sin” in Orthodox theology. The Eastern Holy Fathers also used the term “original damage”, as opposed to “original sin” (which is, actually, a much later Western term.)

[9] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 156-157.

[10] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 160.

[11] St. Athanasius, *On The Incarnation* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1998), 33.

[12] St. Cyril of Alexandria, “Epistle to Nestorius,” http://azbyka.ru/otechnik/?Kirill_Aleksandrijskij/poslanie1_k_nestoriyu.

[13] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1991), 225.

[14] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 197.

[15] Elder Cleopa of Romania, *The Truth of Our Faith* (Thessalonica, Greece & London, Ontario: Uncut Mountain Press, 2000), 154.

[16] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 159.

[17] Pomazansky, *ibid.*, 163-164.

[18] Frank Schaeffer, *Dancing Alone: The Quest for Orthodox Faith in the Age of False Religion* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1994), 207.

[19] Schaeffer, *ibid.*, 74.

[20] Elder Cleopa, *ibid.*, 153.

[21] St. Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, 4:22, <http://www.biblicalstudies.ru/Lib/Father2/Kliment8.html>.

[22] Carmen Fragapane, “Salvation by Christ: A Response to the Credenda/Agenda,” http://www.orthodoxinfo.com/inquirers/frag_salv.aspx.

[23] Archimandrite George, *Theosis: The True Purpose of Human Life* (Mount Athos, Greece: Holy Monastery of St. Gregorios, 2006), 9.

[24] St. Athanasius, *ibid.*, 93.

[25] St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *Against Heresies*, Book 5, 1:1, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.vii.ii.html> April 9, 2010). (accessed

[26] Quoted from Bishop (now Metropolitan) Hilarion (Alfeyev), *Tainstvo very: Vvedenie v pravoslavnoe dogmaticheskoe bogoslovie (The Mystery of Faith: Introduction to Orthodox Dogmatic Theology)*, Chapter 6, "Iskuplenie" ("Redemption"), http://bishop.hilarion.orthodoxia.org/1_3_3_1_9_5.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Schaeffer, *ibid.*, 207.

[29] Archimandrite (later Patriarch) Sergii (Stragorodskii), *Pravoslavnoe uchenie o spasenii (The Orthodox Teaching on Salvation)*, Chapter 3, "Vozmezdie" ("Redemption"), http://azbyka.ru/dictionary/17/sergiy_uchenie_o_spasenii.shtml.

[30] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*

[31] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*

[32] Quoted from Stragorodskii, *ibid.*

[33] Alexander Schmemmann. *Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 16-17.

[34] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 5, "Vera" ("Faith").

[35] St. Clement of Rome, "First Epistle to Corinthians", 32:4, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-lightfoot.html> (accessed April 9, 2010).

[36] Constantine Platis, *Dance, O Isaiah: Questions and Answers on Some of the Differences between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Other Faiths* (Boston, MA: Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston, 2000), 55.

[37] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 5, "Vera" ("Faith").

[38] A.I. Osipov, public lectures, http://www.predanie.ru/mp3/Lekcii_professora_Alekseja_Ilicha_Osipova/.

[39] Osipov, *ibid.*

[40] St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Homily 9, "On Hebrews 6:1-3", <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf114.v.xiii.html> (accessed May 14, 2010).

[41] Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Chapter 13, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.vi.iii.xiii.html> (accessed April 10, 2010).

[42] Tertullian, *ibid.*, Chapter 16.

[43] St. Justin the Martyr, *The First Apology*, Chapter 61, "Christian baptism", <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.viii.ii.lxi.html> (accessed April 10, 2010).

- [44] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 4, “Spasenie” (“Salvation”).
- [45] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*
- [46] *Ibid.*
- [47] *Ibid.*
- [48] *Ibid.*
- [49] One can see, for example, St. Ignatius (Bryanchaninov), *Asketicheskie opyty (Ascetic Essays)*.
- [50] Osipov, *ibid.*
- [51] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*
- [52] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 5, “Vera” (“Faith”).
- [53] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 1, “Pravovoe zhizneponimanie pered sudom Svyashennogo Pisaniya i Svyashennogo Predaniya” (“The Legalistic Mentality before the Judgment by the Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition”).
- [54] Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Part II, “Commands”,
<http://ministries.tliquest.net/theology/apocryphas/nt/hermcom.htm> (accessed April 8, 2010).
- [55] St. Clement, *ibid.*
- [56] St. Clement of Rome, “Second Epistle to Corinthians”,
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- [57] St. Polycarp of Smyrna, “Epistle to Philippians”, <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/polycarp-lightfoot.html> (accessed April 9, 2010).
- [58] Osipov, *ibid.*
- [59] Osipov, *ibid.*
- [60] St. Irenaeus, *ibid.*, Book 4.
- [61] *Ibid.*
- [62] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 5, “Vera” (“Faith”).
- [63] St. Justin the Martyr, *ibid.*
- [64] Ware, *ibid.*, 236.
- [65] Ware, *ibid.*, 238.
- [66] Casimir A. Kucharek, *The Sacramental Mysteries: A Byzantine Approach* (Alleluia Press, 1976), 85-99.

[67] St. Cyprian of Carthage, “Kniga o edinstve cerkvi” (“Book on the Unity of the Church”), <http://apologia.narod.ru/earlyfat/fath/IIIage/kipri1.htm>.

[68] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, Chapter 4, “Spasenie” (“Salvation”).

[69] Kucharek, *ibid.*, 162.

[70] Kucharek, *ibid.*, 166.

[71] St. Justin the Martyr, *ibid.*

[72] *Ibid.*

[73] Stragorodskii, *ibid.*, “Vmesto predisloviya: vopros o lichnom spasenii” (“Instead of Foreword: The Question of Personal Salvation”).

[74] Ware, *ibid.*, 225.

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