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# The Church Is One

Aleksei Khomiakov

Russian Spiritual Classics

Historical English text · 11 sections

1895 / 1907




2026

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# About this edition

The complete essay: all 11 sections. Historical English text from the 1895 volume edited by W. J. Birkbeck.

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The base is the essay printed in Chapter XXIII of Russia and the English Church during the Last Fifty Years, vol. I (London: Rivington, Percival & Co., 1895), pp. 193–222. Myriobiblos's transcription was collated with this historical volume; altered and missing wording was restored. Modern web-editor commentary and the host volume's introduction and Birkbeck's explanatory footnotes are excluded.

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This is a reading edition, not a diplomatic or critical edition. All 11 sections and the four author's notes are included. Historical diction and doctrinal claims are retained; transcription errors and the doubled "the" in the printed Creed are corrected. Biblical chapter numerals are rendered as Arabic numerals. Descriptive headings and paragraph numbers are navigation aids. The host volume's editorial introduction and explanatory notes are not part of this edition.

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## Sources

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# 1. The Unity of the Church

[1] The Church is one. Her unity follows of necessity from the unity of God; for the Church is not a multitude of persons in their separate individuality, but a unity of the grace of God, living in a multitude of rational creatures, submitting themselves willingly to grace. Grace, indeed, is also given to those who resist it, and to those who do not make use of it (who hide their talent in the earth), but these are not in the Church. In fact, the unity of the Church is not imaginary or allegorical, but a true and substantial unity, such as is the unity of many members in a living body.

[2] The Church is one, notwithstanding her division as it appears to a man who is still alive on earth. It is only in relation to man that it is possible to recognise a division of the Church into visible and invisible; her unity is, in reality, true and absolute. Those who are alive on earth, those who have finished their earthly course, those who, like the angels, were not created for a life on earth, those in future generations who have not yet begun their earthly course, are all united together in one Church, in one and the same grace of God; for the creation of God which has not yet been manifested is manifest to Him; and God hears the prayers and knows the faith of those whom He has not yet called out of non-existence into existence. Indeed the Church, the Body of Christ, is manifesting forth and fulfilling herself in time, without changing her essential unity or inward life of grace. And therefore, when we speak of the Church visible and invisible, we so speak only in relation to man.

# 2. The Church upon Earth

[1] The Church visible, or upon earth, lives in complete communion and unity with the whole body of the Church, of which Christ is the Head. She has abiding within her Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit in all their living fulness, but not in the fulness of their manifestation, for she acts and knows not fully, but only so far as it pleases God.

[2] Inasmuch as the earthly and visible Church is not the fulness and completeness of the whole Church which the Lord has appointed to appear at the final judgment of all creation, she acts and knows only within her own limits; and (according to the words of Paul the Apostle, to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 5:12) does not judge the rest of mankind, and only looks upon those as excluded, that is to say, not belonging to her, who exclude themselves. The rest of mankind, whether alien from the Church, or united to her by ties which God has not willed to reveal to her, she leaves to the judgment of the great day. The Church on earth judges for herself only, according to the grace of the Spirit, and the freedom granted her through Christ, inviting also the rest of mankind to the unity and adoption of God in Christ; but upon those who do not hear her appeal she pronounces no sentence, knowing the command of her Saviour and Head, not to judge another man's servant (Rom. 14:4).

# 3. Holiness and Unchangeableness

[1] From the creation of the world the earthly Church has continued uninterruptedly upon the earth, and will continue until the accomplishment of all the works of God, according to the promise given her by God Himself. And her notes are: inward holiness, which does not allow of any admixture of error, for the spirit of truth lives within her; and outward unchangeableness, for Christ, her Preserver and Head does not change.

[2] All the notes of the Church, whether inward or outward, are recognised only by herself, and by those whom grace calls to be members of her. To those, indeed, who are alien from her, and are not called to her, they are unintelligible; for to such as these, outward change of rite appears to be a change of the Spirit itself, which is glorified in the rite (as, for instance, in the transition from the Church of the Old Testament to that of the New, or in the change of ecclesiastical rites and ordinances since Apostolic times). The Church and her members know, by the inward knowledge of faith, the unity and unchangeableness of her spirit, which is the spirit of God. But those who are outside and not called to belong to her, behold and know the changes in the external rite by an external knowledge, which does not comprehend the inward [knowledge], just as also the unchangeableness of God appears to them to be changeable in the changes of His creations. Wherefore the Church has not been, nor could she be, changed or obscured, nor could she have fallen away, for then she would have been deprived of the spirit of truth. It is impossible that there should have been a time when she could have received error into her bosom, or when the laity, presbyters, and bishops had submitted to instructions or

teaching inconsistent with the teaching and spirit of Christ. The man who should say that such a weakening of the spirit of Christ could possibly come to pass within her knows nothing of the Church, and is altogether alien from her. Moreover, a partial revolt against false doctrines, together with the retention or acceptance of other false doctrines, neither is, nor could be, the work of the Church; for within her, according to her very essence, there must always have been preachers and teachers and martyrs confessing, not partial truth with an admixture of error, but the full and unadulterated truth. The Church knows nothing of partial truth and partial error, but only the whole truth without admixture of error. And the man who is living within the Church does not submit to false teaching or receive the Sacraments from a false teacher; he will not, knowing him to be false, follow his false rites. And the Church herself does not err, for she is the truth, she is incapable of cunning or cowardice, for she is holy. And of course, the Church, by her very unchangeableness, does not acknowledge that to be error, which she has at any previous time acknowledged as truth; and having proclaimed by a General Council and common consent, that it is possible for any private individual, or any bishop or patriarch, [1] to err in his teaching, she cannot acknowledge that such or such private individual, or bishop, or patriarch, or successor of theirs, is incapable of falling into error in teaching; or that they are preserved from going astray by any special grace. By what would the earth be sanctified, if the Church were to lose her sanctity? And where would there be truth, if her judgments of to-day were contrary to those of yesterday? Within the Church, that is to say, within her members, false doctrines may be engendered, but then the infected members fall away, constituting a

heresy or schism, and no longer defile the sanctity of the Church.

# 4. One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

[1] The Church is called One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; because she is one, and holy; because she belongs to the whole world, and not to any particular locality; because by her all mankind and all the earth, and not any particular nation or country, are sanctified; because her very essence consists in the agreement and unity of the spirit and life of all the members who acknowledge her, throughout the world; lastly, because in the writings and doctrine of the Apostles is contained all the fulness of her faith, her hope, and her love.

[2] From this it follows that when any society is called the Church of Christ, with the addition of a local name, such as the Greek, Russian, or Syrian Church, this appellation signifies nothing more than the congregation of members of the Church living in that particular locality, that is, Greece, Russia, or Syria; and does not involve any such idea as that any single community of Christians is able to formulate the doctrine of the Church, or to give a dogmatic interpretation to the teaching of the Church without the concurrence therewith of the other communities; still less is it implied that any one particular community, or the pastor thereof, can prescribe its own interpretation to the others. The grace of faith is not to be separated from holiness of life, and neither any single community nor any single pastor can be acknowledged to be the custodian of the whole faith of the Church, any more than any single community or any single pastor can be looked upon as the representative of the whole of her sanctity. Nevertheless, every Christian community, without assuming to itself the right of dogmatic explanation or teaching, has a full right to change its forms and

ceremonies, and to introduce new ones, so long as it does not cause offence to the other communities. Rather than do this, it ought to abandon its own opinion, and submit to that of the others, lest that which to one might seem harmless or even praiseworthy should seem blameable to another; or that brother should lead brother into the sin of doubt and discord. Every Christian ought to set a high value upon unity in the rites of the Church: for thereby is manifested, even for the unenlightened, unity of spirit and doctrine, while for the enlightened man it becomes a source of lively and Christian joy. Love is the crown and glory of the Church.

# 5. Scripture, Tradition, and Works

[1] The Spirit of God, who lives in the Church, ruling her and making her wise, manifests Himself within her in divers manners; in Scripture, in Tradition, and in Works; for the Church, which does the works of God, is the same Church which preserves tradition and which has written the Scriptures. Neither individuals, nor a multitude of individuals within the Church, preserve tradition or write the Scriptures; but the Spirit of God, which lives in the whole body of the Church. Therefore it is neither right nor possible to look for the grounds of tradition in the Scripture, nor for the proof of Scripture in tradition, nor for the warrant of Scripture or tradition in works. To a man living outside the Church neither her scripture nor her tradition nor her works are comprehensible. But to the man who lives within the Church and is united to the spirit of the Church, their unity is manifest by the grace which lives within her.

[2] Do not works precede Scripture and tradition? Does not tradition precede Scripture? Were not the works of Noah, Abraham, the forefathers and representatives of the Church of the Old Testament, pleasing to God? And did not tradition exist amongst the patriarchs, beginning with Adam, the forefather of all? Did not Christ give liberty to men and teaching by word of mouth, before the Apostles by their writings bore witness to the work of redemption and the law of liberty? Wherefore, between tradition, works, and scripture there is no contradiction, but, on the contrary, complete agreement. A man understands the Scriptures, so far as he preserves tradition, and does works agreeable to the wisdom that lives within him. But the wisdom that lives within him is not given to him individually, but as a member

of the Church, and it is given to him in part, without altogether annulling his individual error; but to the Church it is given in the fulness of truth and without any admixture of error. Wherefore he must not judge the Church, but submit to her, that wisdom be not taken from him.

3 Every one that seeks for proofs of the truth of the Church, by that very act either shows his doubt, and excludes himself from the Church, or assumes the appearance of one who doubts and at the same time preserves a hope of proving the truth, and arriving at it by his own power of reason: but the powers of reason do not attain to the truth of God, and the weakness of man is made manifest by the weakness of his proofs. The man who takes Scripture only, and founds the Church on it alone, is in reality rejecting the Church, and is hoping to found her afresh by his own powers: the man who takes tradition and works only, and depreciates the importance of Scripture, is likewise in reality rejecting the Church, and constituting himself a judge of the Spirit of God, who spake by the Scripture. For Christian knowledge is a matter, not of intellectual investigation, but of a living faith, which is a gift of grace. Scripture is external, an outward thing, and tradition is external, and works are external: that which is inward in them is the one Spirit of God. From tradition taken alone, or from scripture or from works, a man can but derive an external and incomplete knowledge, which may indeed in itself contain truth, for it starts from truth, but at the same time must of necessity be erroneous, inasmuch as it is incomplete. A believer knows the Truth, but an unbeliever does not know it, or at least only knows it with an external and imperfect knowledge. [2] The Church does not prove herself either as Scripture or as tradition or as works, but bears witness to herself, just as the Spirit of God, dwelling in her, bears witness to Himself in the Scriptures.

The Church does not ask: Which Scripture is true, which tradition is true, which Council is true, or what works are pleasing to God: for Christ knows His own inheritance, and the Church in which He lives knows by inward knowledge, and cannot help knowing, her own manifestations. The collection of Old and New Testament books, which the Church acknowledges as hers, are called by the name of Holy Scripture. But there are no limits to Scripture; for every writing which the Church acknowledges as hers is Holy Scripture. Such pre-eminently are the Creeds of the General Councils, and especially the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. Wherefore, the writing of Holy Scripture has gone on up to our day, and, if God pleases, yet more will be written. But in the Church there has not been, nor ever will be, any contradictions, either in Scripture, or in tradition, or in works; for in all three is Christ, one and unchangeable.

# 6. Faith, Hope, and Love

[1] Every action of the Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of life and truth, sets forth the full completeness of all His gifts, — of faith, hope, and love: for in Scripture not faith only, but also the hope of the Church, is made manifest, and the love of God; and in works well pleasing to God there is made manifest not only love, but likewise faith and hope and grace; and in the living tradition of the Church which awaits from God her crown and consummation in Christ, not hope only, but also faith and love are manifested. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are inseparably united in one holy and living unity; but as works well pleasing to God belong more especially to love, and prayer well pleasing to God belongs more especially to hope, so a Creed well pleasing to God belongs more especially to faith, and the Church's creed is rightly called the Confession or Symbol of the Faith.

[2] Wherefore it must be understood that Creeds and prayers and works are nothing of themselves, but are only an external manifestation of the inward spirit. Whereupon it also follows that neither he who prays nor he who does works nor he who confesses the Creed of the Church is pleasing to God, but only he who acts, confesses, and prays according to the spirit of Christ living within him. All men have not the same faith or the same hope or the same love; for a man may love the flesh, fix his hope on the world, and confess his belief in a lie; he may also love and hope and believe not fully, but only in part; and the Church calls his faith, faith, and his hope, hope, and his love, love; for he calls them so, and she will not dispute with him concerning words; but what she herself calls faith, hope, and love are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and she knows that they are true and perfect.

# 7. The Confession of Faith

[1] Holy Church confesses her faith by her whole life; by her doctrine, which is inspired by the Holy Ghost; by her Sacraments in which the Holy Ghost works; and by her rites, which He directs. And the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol is pre-eminently called her Confession of Faith.

[2] In the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol is comprised the confession of the Church's doctrine; but, in order that it might be known that the hope of the Church is inseparable from her doctrine it likewise confesses her hope; for it is said: we look for, and not merely, we believe in, that which is to come.

[3] The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol, the full and complete Confession of the Church, from which she allows nothing to be omitted and to which she permits nothing to be added, is as follows:

[4] We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, who was begotten of His Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; [Who] for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the

Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified. [Who] spake by the Prophets. In one, Holy, Catholick and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the Resurrection of the dead, and for the life of the world to come. Amen.

[5] This confession, just as also the whole life of the Spirit, is comprehensible only to one who believes and is a member of the Church. It contains within itself mysteries inaccessible to the inquiring intellect, and manifest only to God Himself, and to those to whom He makes them manifest for an inward and living, not a dead and outward, knowledge. It contains within itself the mystery of the existence of God not only in relation to His outward action upon creation, but also to His inward eternal being. Therefore the pride of reason and of illegal domination, which appropriated to itself, in opposition to the decree of the whole Church (pronounced at the Council of Ephesus), the right to add its private explanations and human hypotheses to the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol is in itself an infraction of the sanctity and inviolability of the Church. Just as the very pride of the separate Churches, which dared to change the Symbol of the whole Church without the consent of their brethren, was inspired by a spirit not of love, and was a crime against God and the Church, so also their blind wisdom, which did not comprehend the mysteries of God, was a distortion of the faith; for faith is not preserved where love has grown weak. Wherefore the addition of the words filioque contains a sort of imaginary dogma, unknown to any one of the writers well pleasing to God, or of the Bishops or successors of the Apostles in the first ages of the Church, and not spoken by Christ our Saviour. As Christ spoke clearly, so did and does the Church

clearly confess that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father; for not only the outward, but also the inward, mysteries of God were revealed by Christ, and by the Spirit of Faith, to the holy Apostles and to the holy Church. When Theodoret called all who confessed the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son blasphemers, the Church, while detecting his many errors, in this case approved his judgment by an eloquent silence. [3] The Church does not deny that the Holy Spirit is sent not only by the Father, but also by the Son; the Church does not deny that the Holy Ghost is communicated to all rational creatures not only from the Father but also through the Son; but what she does reject is that the Holy Ghost had the principle of His procession in the Godhead itself, not merely from the Father, but also from the Son. He who has renounced the spirit of love and divested himself of the gifts of grace cannot any longer possess inward knowledge — that is faith — but limits himself to mere outward knowledge; wherefore he can only know what is external, and not the inner mysteries of God. Communities of Christians which had broken away from the Holy Church could no longer confess (inasmuch as they now could not comprehend with the Spirit) the procession of the Holy Ghost, in the Godhead itself, from the Father only; but from that time they were obliged to confess only the external mission of the Spirit into all creation, a mission which comes to pass, not only from the Father, but also through the Son. They preserved the external form of the faith, but they lost the inner meaning and the grace of God; as in their confession, so also in their life.

# 8. The Sacraments of the Church

[1] Having confessed her faith in the Tri-hypostatic Deity, the Church confesses her faith in herself, because she acknowledges herself to be the instrument and vessel of divine grace, and acknowledges her works as the works of God, not as the works of the individuals of whom, in her visible manifestation [upon earth], she is composed. In this confession she shows that knowledge concerning her essence and being is likewise a gift of grace, granted from above, and accessible to faith alone and not to reason.

[2] For what would be the need for me to say, I believe, if I already knew? Is not faith the evidence of things not seen? But the visible Church is not the visible society of Christians, but the Spirit of God and the grace of the Sacraments living in this society. Wherefore even the visible Church is visible only to the believer; for to the unbeliever a sacrament is only a rite, and the Church merely a Society. The believer, while with the eyes of the body and of reason he sees the Church in her outward manifestations only, by the Spirit takes knowledge of her in her sacraments and prayers and works well pleasing to God. Wherefore he does not confuse her with the society which bears the name of Christians, for not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, really belongs to the chosen race and to the seed of Abraham. But the true Christian knows by faith that the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church will never disappear from the face of the earth until the last judgment of all creation, that she will remain on earth invisible to fleshly eyes, or to the understanding which is wise according to the flesh, among the visible society of Christians, exactly in the same way as she remains visible to the eye of faith in the Church beyond the grave, but invisible

to the bodily eyes. But the Christian also knows that the Church upon earth, although it is invisible, is always clothed in a visible form; that there neither was, nor could have been, nor ever will be a time in which the sacraments will be mutilated, holiness will be dried up, or doctrine will be corrupted; and that he is no Christian who cannot say where, from the time of the Apostles themselves, the holy Sacraments have been and are being administered, where doctrine was and is preserved, where prayers were and are being sent up to the throne of grace. The Holy Church confesses and believes that the sheep have never been deprived of their Divine Pastor, and that the Church never could either err for want of understanding, —for the understanding of God dwells within her; or submit to false doctrines for want of courage, — for within her dwells the might of the Spirit of God.

3 Believing in the word of God's promise, which has named all the followers of Christ's doctrine the friends of Christ and His brethren, and in Him the adopted sons of God, the Holy Church confesses the paths by which it pleases God to lead fallen and dead humanity to reunion in the spirit of grace and life. Wherefore, having made mention of the prophets, the representatives of the age of the Old Testament, she confesses Sacraments, through which, in the Church of the New Testament, God sends down His grace upon men, and more especially she confesses the Sacrament of Baptism for the remission of sins, as containing within itself the principle of all the others; for through Baptism alone does a man enter into the unity of the Church, which is the custodian of all the rest of the Sacraments.

4 Confessing one Baptism for the remission of sins, as a Sacrament ordained by Christ Himself for entrance into the

Church of the New Testament, the Church does not judge those who have not entered into communion with her through Baptism, for she knows and judges herself only. God alone knows the hardness of the heart, and He judges the weaknesses of reason according to truth and mercy. Many have been saved and have received inheritance without having received the Sacrament of Baptism with water; for it was instituted only for the Church of the New Testament. He who rejects it rejects the whole Church, and the Spirit of God which lives within her; but it was not ordained for man from the beginning, neither was it prescribed to the Church of the Old Testament. For if any one should say that circumcision was the Baptism of the Old Testament, he rejects Baptism for women, for whom there was no circumcision; and what will he say about the Patriarchs from Adam to Abraham, who did not receive the seal of circumcision? And in any case does not he acknowledge that outside the Church of the New Testament the Sacrament of Baptism was not of obligation? If he will say that it was on behalf of the Church of the Old Testament that Christ received Baptism, who will place a limit to the loving-kindness of God, who took upon Himself the sins of the world? Baptism is indeed of obligation; for it alone is the door into the Church of the New Testament, and in Baptism alone does man testify his assent to the redeeming action of grace. Wherefore also in Baptism alone is he saved.

5 Moreover, we know that in confessing one Baptism, as the beginning of all the Sacraments, we do not reject the others; for, believing in the Church, we, together with her, confess Seven Sacraments, namely, Baptism, the Eucharist, Laying on of Hands, Confirmation with Chrism, Marriage, Penance, and Unction of the sick. There are also many other Sacraments; for every work which is done in faith, love, and

hope, is suggested to man by the Spirit of God, and invokes the unseen Grace of God. But the Seven Sacraments are in reality not accomplished by any single individual who is worthy of the mercy of God, but by the whole Church in the person of an individual, even though he be unworthy.

6 Concerning the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Holy Church teaches that in it the change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is verily accomplished. She does not reject the word Transubstantiation; but she does not assign to it that material meaning which is assigned to it by the teachers of the Churches which have fallen away. The change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is accomplished in the Church and for the Church. If a man receive the consecrated Gifts, or worship them, or think on them with faith, he verily receives, adores, and thinks on the Body and Blood of Christ. If he receive unworthily he verily rejects the Body and Blood of Christ; in any case, in faith or in unbelief, he is sanctified or condemned by the Body and Blood of Christ. But this Sacrament is in the Church, and for the Church; not for the outside world, not for fire, not for irrational creatures, not for corruption, and not for the man who has not heard the law of Christ. In the Church itself (we are speaking of the visible Church), to the elect and to the reprobate the Holy Eucharist is not a mere commemoration concerning the mystery of redemption, it is not a presence of spiritual gifts within the bread and wine, it is not merely a spiritual reception of the Body and Blood of Christ, but is His true Body and Blood. Not in spirit alone was Christ pleased to unite Himself with the faithful, but also in Body and in Blood; in order that that union might be complete, and not only spiritual but also corporal. Both nonsensical explanations concerning the relations of the holy Sacrament to elements and irrational creatures (when the

Sacrament was instituted for the Church alone), and that spiritual pride which despises body and blood and rejects the corporal union with Christ, are equally opposed to the Church. We shall not rise again without the body, and no spirit, except the Spirit of God, can be said to be entirely incorporeal. He that despises the body sins through pride of spirit.

7 Of the Sacrament of Ordination the Holy Church teaches, that through it the grace which brings the Sacraments into effect is handed on in succession from the Apostles and from Christ Himself: not as if no Sacrament could be brought to effect otherwise than through Ordination (for every Christian is able through Baptism to open the door of the Church to an infant or a Jew or a heathen), but that Ordination contains within itself all the fulness of grace given by Christ to His Church. And the Church herself, in communicating to her members the fulness of spiritual gifts, in the strength of the freedom given her by God, has appointed differences in the grades of Ordination. The Presbyter who performs all the Sacraments except Ordination has one gift, the Bishop who performs Ordination has another: and higher than the gift of the Episcopate there is nothing. The Sacrament gives to him who receives it this great significance, that even if he be unworthy, yet in performing his Sacramental service, his action necessarily proceeds not from himself, but from the whole Church, that is, from Christ living within her. If Ordination ceased, all the Sacraments except Baptism would also cease; and the human race would be torn away from grace: for the Church herself would then bear witness that Christ had departed from her.

8 Concerning the Sacrament of Confirmation with Chrism, the Church teaches that in it the gifts of the Holy Ghost are

conferred upon the Christian, confirming his faith and inward holiness: and this Sacrament is by the will of the Holy Church performed not by Bishops only, but also by Presbyters, although the Chrism itself can only be blessed by a Bishop.

[9] Of the Sacrament of Marriage the Holy Church teaches that the grace of God, which blesses the succession of generations in the temporal existence of the human race, and the holy union of man and woman for the organisation of the family, is a sacramental gift, imposing upon those who receive it a high obligation of mutual love and spiritual holiness, through which that which otherwise is sinful and material is endued with righteousness and purity. Wherefore the great teachers of the Church, the Apostles, recognise the Sacrament of marriage even amongst the heathen: for while they forbid concubinage, they confirm marriage between Christians and heathens; saying that the man is sanctified by the believing wife, and the wife by the believing husband (1 Cor. 7:14). These words of the Apostle do not mean that an unbeliever could be saved by his or her union with a believer, but that the marriage is sanctified: for it is not the person, but the husband or wife, who is sanctified. One person is not saved through another, but the husband or the wife is sanctified in relation to the marriage itself. And thus marriage is not unclean, even amongst idolaters; but they themselves know not of the grace of God given unto them. But the Holy Church through her ordained ministers acknowledges and blesses the union, blessed by God, of husband and wife. Wherefore marriage is not a mere rite but a true Sacrament. And it receives its accomplishment in the Holy Church, for in her alone is every holy thing accomplished in its fulness.

[10] Concerning the Sacrament of Penance the Holy Church teaches that without it the spirit of man cannot be cleansed

from the bondage of sin and of sinful pride: that he himself cannot remit his own sins (for we have only the power to condemn, not to justify ourselves), and that the Church alone has the power of justifying, for within her lives the fulness of the Spirit of Christ. We know that the first-fruits of the Kingdom of heaven, after the Saviour, entered into the sanctuary of God by the judging of himself, that is to say, by the Sacrament of Penance; for he said for we receive the due reward of our deeds; and he received absolution from Him who alone can absolve, and who does absolve by the mouth of His Church.

[11] Of the Sacrament of Anointing with consecrated oil [i.e. Unction of the Sick] the Holy Church teaches that in it is perfected the blessing of the whole fight (2 Tim. 4:7), which has been endured by a man in his life upon earth, and of all the journey which has been gone through by him in faith and humility, and that in Unction of the Sick the divine verdict itself is pronounced upon man's earthly frame, healing it, when all medicinal means are of no avail, or else permitting death to destroy the corruptible body, which is no longer required for the Church on earth or the mysterious ways of God.

# 9. Life, Prayer, and Unity

[1] The Church, even upon earth, lives, not an earthly human life, but a life which is divine, and of grace. Wherefore not only each of her members, but she herself as a whole, solemnly calls herself Holy. Her visible manifestation is contained in the Sacraments; but her inward life in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in faith, hope, and love. Oppressed and persecuted by enemies without, at times agitated and lacerated within by the evil passions of her children, she has been and ever will be preserved without wavering or change wherever the Sacraments and spiritual holiness are preserved. Never is she either disfigured or in need of reformation. She lives not under a law of bondage, but under a law of liberty. She neither acknowledges any authority over her, except her own, nor any tribunal, but the tribunal of faith: for reason does not comprehend her: and she expresses her love, her faith, and her hope in her prayers and rites, suggested to her by the Spirit of truth, and by the grace of Christ. Wherefore her rites themselves, even if they are not unchangeable (for they are composed by the spirit of liberty and may be changed according to the judgment of the Church) can never, in any case, contain any, even the smallest, admixture of error or false doctrine. And the rites (of the Church) while they are unchanged are of obligation to the members of the Church; for in their observance is the joy of holy unity.

[2] External unity is the unity manifested in the communion of Sacraments; while internal unity is unity of spirit. Many (as for instance some of the martyrs) have been saved without having been made partakers of so much as one of the Sacraments of the Church (not even of Baptism) but no one is

saved without partaking of the inward holiness of the Church, of her faith, hope, and love: for it is not works which save, but faith. And faith, that is to say, true and living faith, is not twofold, but single. Wherefore both those who say that faith alone does not save, but that works also are necessary, and those who say that faith saves without works, are void of understanding; for if there are no works, then faith is shown to be dead; and, if it be dead, it is also untrue; for in true faith there is Christ the truth and the life; but, if it be not true, then it is false, that is to say, mere external knowledge. But can that which is false save a man? But if it be true, then it is also a living faith, that is to say, one which does works; but if it does works, what works are still required?

3 The divinely inspired Apostle saith: Show me the faith of which thou boastest thyself by thy works, even as I show my faith by my works. Does he acknowledge two faiths? No, but he exposes a senseless boast. Thou believest in God, but the devils also believe. Does he acknowledge that there is faith in devils? No, but he detects the falsehood which boasts itself of a quality which even devils possess. As the body, saith he, without the soul is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Does he compare faith to the body and works to the Spirit? No, for such a simile would be untrue; but the meaning of his words is clear. Just as a body without a soul is no longer a man, and cannot properly be called a man, but a corpse, so faith also that does no works cannot be called true faith, but false; that is to say, an external knowledge; fruitless, and attainable even by devils. That which is written simply ought also to be read simply. Wherefore those who rely upon the Apostle James for a proof that there is a dead faith and a living faith, and as it were two faiths, do not comprehend the words of the Apostle; for the Apostle bears witness not for, but against them. Likewise when the Great Apostle of the

Gentiles says, What is the use of faith without love, even of such a faith as would remove mountains? (Cp. 1 Cor. 13:2) he does not maintain the possibility of such faith without love: but assuming its possibility he shows that it would be useless. Holy Scripture ought not to be read in the spirit of worldly wisdom, which wrangles over words, but in the spirit of the wisdom of God, and of spiritual simplicity. The Apostle, in defining faith, says, it is the evidence of things unseen, and the confidence of things hoped for (not merely of things awaited, or things to come), but if we hope, we also desire, and if we desire, we also love; for it is impossible to desire that which a man loves not. Or have the devils also hope? Wherefore there is but one faith, and when we ask, Can true faith save without works? we ask a senseless question; or better to say, no question at all: for true faith is a living faith which does works; it is faith in Christ, and Christ in faith.

4 Those who have mistaken a dead faith, that is to say, a false faith, or mere external knowledge, for true faith, have gone so far in their delusion, that, without knowing it themselves, they have made of it an eighth Sacrament. The Church has faith, but it is a living faith; for she has also sanctity. But if one man or one bishop is necessarily to have the faith, what are we to say? Has he also sanctity? No, for it may be he is notorious for crime and immorality. But the faith is to abide in him even though he be a sinner. So the faith within him is an eighth Sacrament; inasmuch as every Sacrament is the action of the Church in an individual, even though he be unworthy. But through this Sacrament what sort of faith abides in him? A living faith? No, for he is a sinner. But a dead faith, that is to say, external knowledge, is attainable, even by devils. And is this to be an eighth Sacrament? Thus does departure from the truth bring about its own punishment. [4]

[5] We must understand that neither faith nor hope nor love saves of itself — for will faith in reason, or hope in the world, or love for the flesh save us? No, it is the object of faith which saves. If a man believes in Christ, he is saved in his faith by Christ: if he believes in the Church, he is saved by the Church; if he believes in Christ's Sacraments, he is saved by them; for Christ our God is in the Church and the Sacraments. The Church of the Old Testament was saved by faith in a Redeemer to come. Abraham was saved by the same Christ as we. He possessed Christ in hope, while we possess Him in joy. Wherefore he who desires Baptism is baptized in will; while he who has received Baptism possesses it in joy. An identical faith in Baptism saves both of them. But a man may say, if faith in Baptism saves, what is the use of being actually baptized? If he does not receive Baptism what did he wish for? It is evident that the faith which desires Baptism must be perfected by the reception of Baptism itself, which is its joy. Therefore also the house of Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he received Baptism, while the eunuch was filled with the same Spirit immediately after Baptism (Acts 10:44-47; 8:38; cf. 2:38). For God can glorify the Sacrament of Baptism just as well before, as after, its administration. Thus the difference between the opus operans and opus operatum disappears. We know that there are many persons who have not christened their children, and many who have not admitted them to Communion in the Holy Mysteries, and many who have not confirmed them: but the Holy Church understands things otherwise, christening infants and confirming them and admitting them to Communion. She has not ordained these things in order to condemn unbaptized children, whose angels do alway behold the face of God: but she has ordained this, according to the spirit of love which lives within her, in

order that the first thought of a child arriving at years of discretion should be not only a desire, but also a joy for sacraments which have been already received. And can one know the joy of a child, who, to all appearances has not yet arrived at discretion? Did not the prophet, even before His birth, exult for joy concerning Christ? (St. Luke 1:41) Those who have deprived children of Baptism and Confirmation and Communion are they, who, having inherited the blind wisdom of blind heathendom, have not comprehended the majesty of God's Sacraments, but have required reasons and uses for everything, and having subjected the doctrine of the Church to scholastic explications, will not even pray, unless they see in the prayer some direct goal or advantage. But our law is not a law of bondage or of hireling service, labouring for wages, but a law of the adoption of sons, and of love which is free.

6 We know that when any one of us falls, he falls alone; but no one is saved alone. He who is saved is saved in the Church, as a member of her, and in unity with all her other members. If any one believes, he is in the communion of faith; if he loves, he is in the communion of love; if he prays, he is in the communion of prayer. Wherefore no one can rest his hope on his own prayers, and every one who prays asks the whole Church for intercession, not as if he had doubts of the intercession of Christ, the one Advocate, but in the assurance that the whole Church ever prays for all her members. All the angels pray for us, the apostles, martyrs, and patriarchs, and above them all, the Mother of our Lord, and this holy unity is the true life of the Church. But if the Church, visible and invisible, prays without ceasing, why do we ask her for her prayers? Do we not entreat mercy of God and Christ, although His mercy preventeth our prayer? The very reason that we ask the Church for her prayers is that we

know that she gives the assistance of her intercession even to him that does not ask for it, and to him that asks she gives it in far greater measure than he asks: for in her is the fulness of the Spirit of God. Thus we glorify all whom God has glorified and is glorifying; for how should we say that Christ is living within us, if we do not make ourselves like unto Christ? Wherefore we glorify the Saints, the Angels, and the Prophets, and more than all the most pure Mother of the Lord Jesus, not acknowledging her either to have been conceived without sin, or to have been perfect (for Christ alone is without sin and perfect), but remembering that the pre-eminence, passing all understanding, which she has above all God's creatures was borne witness to by the Angel and by Elizabeth, and above all, by the Saviour Himself, when He appointed John, His great Apostle and seer of mysteries, to fulfil the duties of a son and to serve her.

[7] Just as each of us requires prayers from all, so each person owes his prayers on behalf of all, the living and the dead, and even those who are as yet unborn: for in praying, as we do with all the Church, that the world may come to the knowledge of God, we pray not only for the present generation, but for those whom God will hereafter call into life. We pray for the living that the grace of God may be upon them, and for the dead that they may become worthy of the vision of God's face. We know nothing of an intermediate state of souls, which have neither been received into the kingdom of God, nor condemned to torture, for of such a state we have received no teaching either from the Apostles or from Christ; we do not acknowledge Purgatory, that is, the purification of souls by sufferings from which they may be redeemed by their own works or those of others: for the Church knows nothing of salvation by outward means, nor any sufferings whatever they may be, except those of Christ;

nor of bargaining with God, as in the case of a man buying himself off by good works.

[8] All such heathenism as this remains with the inheritors of the wisdom of the heathen, with those who pride themselves of place, or name, or in territorial dominion, and who have instituted an eighth Sacrament of dead faith. But we pray in the spirit of love, knowing that no one will be saved otherwise than by the prayer of all the Church, in which Christ lives, knowing and trusting that so long as the end of time has not come, all the members of the Church, both living and departed, are being perfected incessantly by mutual prayer. The Saints whom God has glorified are much higher than we, but higher than all is the Holy Church, which comprises within herself all the Saints, and prays for all, as may be seen in the divinely inspired Liturgy. In her prayer our prayer is also heard, however unworthy we may be to be called sons of the Church. If, while worshipping and glorifying the Saints, we pray that God may glorify them, we do not lay ourselves open to the charge of pride; for to us who have received permission to call God Our Father leave has also been granted to pray, Hallowed be His Name. His Kingdom come, His will be done. And if we are permitted to pray of God that He will glorify His Name, and accomplish His Will, who will forbid us to pray Him to glorify His Saints, and to give repose to His elect? For those indeed who are not of the elect we do not pray, just as Christ prayed not for the whole world, but for those whom the Lord had given unto Him (John 17). Let no one say: What prayer shall I apportion for the living or the departed, when my prayers are insufficient even for myself? For if he is not able to pray, of what use would it be to pray even for himself? But in truth the spirit of love prays in him. Likewise let him not say: What is the good of my prayer for another, when he prays for himself, and Christ Himself

intercedes for him? When a man prays, it is the spirit of love which prays within him. Let him not say: It is even now impossible to change the judgment of God, for his prayer itself is included in the ways of God, and God foresaw it. If he be a member of the Church his prayer is necessary for all her members. If the hand should say, that it did not require blood from the rest of the body, and that it would not give its own blood to it, the hand would wither. So a man is also necessary to the Church, as long as he is in her: and if he withdraws himself from communion with her, he perishes himself and will cease to be any longer a member of the Church. The Church prays for all, and we pray together for all; but our prayer must be true, and a true expression of love, and not a mere form of words. Not being able to love all men, we pray for those whom we love, and our prayer is not hypocritical; but we pray God, that we may be able to love all, and pray for all without hypocrisy. Mutual prayer is the blood of the Church, and the glorification of God her breath. We pray in a spirit of love, not of interest, in the spirit of filial freedom, not of the law of the hireling demanding his pay. Every man who asks: What use is there in prayer? acknowledges himself to be in bondage. True prayer is true love.

9 Love and unity are above everything, but love expresses itself in many ways: by works, by prayer, and by spiritual songs. The Church bestows her blessing upon all these expressions of love. If a man cannot express his love for God by word, but expresses it by a visible representation, that is to say, by an image (eikon), will the Church condemn him? No, but she will condemn the man who condemns him, for he is condemning another's love. We know that without the use of an image men may be saved and have been saved, and if a man's love does not require an image he will be saved without one; but if the love of his brother require an image,

he, in condemning this brother's love, condemneth himself; if a man being a Christian dare not listen without a feeling of reverence to a prayer or spiritual song composed by his brother, how dare he look without reverence upon the image which his love, and not his art, has produced? The Lord Himself, who knows the secrets of the heart, has designed more than once to glorify a prayer or psalm: will a man forbid Him to glorify an image or the graves of the Saints? One may say: The Old Testament has forbidden the representation of God: but does he, who thus thinks that he understands better than Holy Church the words which she herself wrote (that is, the Scriptures), not see that it was not a representation of God which the Old Testament forbade (for it allowed the Cherubim, and the brazen serpent, and the writing of the Name of God), but that it forbade a man to make unto himself a god in the similitude of any object in earth or in heaven, visible or even imaginary?

[10] If a man paints an image to remind him of the invisible and inconceivable God, he is not making to himself an idol. If he imagines God to himself and thinks that He is like to his imagination, he maketh to himself an idol — that is the meaning of the prohibition in the Old Testament. But an image [eikon] (that is to say, the Name of God painted in colours), or a representation of His Saints, made by love, is not forbidden by the spirit of truth. Let none say, Christians are going over to idolatry; for the spirit of Christ which preserves the Church is wiser than a man's calculating wisdom. Wherefore a man may indeed be saved without images, but he must not reject images.

[11] The Church accepts every rite which expresses spiritual aspiration towards God, just as she accepts prayer and images [eikons], but she recognises as higher than all rites

the holy Liturgy, in which is expressed all the fulness of the doctrine and spirit of the Church; and this not only by conventional signs or symbols of some kind, but by the word of life and truth inspired from above. He alone knows the Church who knows the Liturgy. But above all is the unity of holiness and love.

# 10. Resurrection and the Life to Come

[1] The Holy Church, in confessing that she looks for the Resurrection of the dead and the final judgment of all mankind, acknowledges that the perfecting of all her members will be fulfilled together with her own, and that the future life pertains, not only to the spirit, but also to the spiritual body; for God alone is a perfectly incorporeal Spirit. Wherefore she rejects the pride of those who preach a doctrine of an incorporeal state beyond the grave, and consequently despise the body, in which Christ rose from the dead. This body will not be a fleshly body, but will be like unto the corporeal state of the Angels, inasmuch as Christ Himself said that we shall be like unto the Angels.

[2] In the last Judgment our justification in Christ will be revealed in its fulness; not our sanctification only, but also our justification, for no man has been or is as yet completely sanctified, but there is still need of justification. Christ worketh all that is good in us, whether it be in faith or in hope or in love; while we only submit ourselves to His working: but no man submits himself wholly. Therefore there is still need of justification by the sufferings and blood of Christ. Who, then, can continue to speak of the merits of his own works, or of a treasury of merits and prayers? Only those who are still living under a law of bondage. Christ works all good in us, but we never wholly submit ourselves, none, not even the Saints, as the Saviour Himself has said. Grace works all, and grace is given freely and to all, that none should be able to murmur, but not equally to all, not according to predestination, but according to foreknowledge, as the Apostle says. A smaller talent indeed is given to the man in

whom the Lord has foreseen negligence, in order that the rejection of a greater gift should not serve to greater condemnation. And we do not increase the talents which have been intrusted to us ourselves, but they are put out to the exchangers, in order that even here there should not be any merit of ours, but only non-resistance to the grace, which causes the increase. Thus the distinction between sufficient and effectual grace disappears. Grace worketh all. If a man submits to it the Lord is perfected in him, and perfects him; but let not a man boast himself in his obedience, for his obedience itself is of grace. But we never submit ourselves wholly: wherefore besides sanctification we ask also for justification.

[3] All is accomplished in the consummation of the general judgment, and the Spirit of God, that is, the Spirit of faith, hope, and love, will reveal Himself in all His fulness, and every gift will attain its utmost perfection: — but above them all will be love. Not that it is to be thought that faith and hope, which are the gifts of God, will perish (for they are not separable from love), but love alone will preserve its name, while faith, arriving at its consummation, will then have become full inward knowledge and sight; and hope will have become joy: for even on earth we know that the stronger it is, the more joyful it is.

# 11. The Orthodox Church

[1] By the will of God the Holy Church, after the falling away of many schisms, and of the Roman Patriarchate, was preserved in the Greek Eparchies and Patriarchates, and only those communities can acknowledge one another as fully Christian which preserve their unity with the Eastern Patriarchates, or enter into this unity. For there is one God and one Church, and within her there is neither dissension nor disagreement.

[2] And therefore the Church is called Orthodox, or Eastern, or Greco-Russian, but all these are only temporary designations. The Church ought not to be accused of pride for calling herself Orthodox, inasmuch as she also calls herself Holy. When false doctrines shall have disappeared, there will be no further need for the name Orthodox: for then there will be no erroneous Christianity. When the Church shall have extended herself, or the fulness of the nations shall have entered into her, then all local appellations will cease; for the Church is not bound up with any locality, and neither boasts herself of any particular see or territory, nor preserves the inheritance of Pagan pride: but she calls herself One Holy Catholic and Apostolic; knowing that the whole world belongs to her, and that no locality therein possesses any special significance, but only temporarily can and does serve for the glorification of the name of God, according to His unsearchable will.

# Notes

**1.** As for instance, Pope Honorius, whose teaching was condemned at the sixth General Council. — Author’s note. ↑

**2.** For this reason, even he who is not sanctified by the spirit of grace may know the truth even as we hope that we know it: but this knowledge is in itself nothing but an hypothesis, more or less sound as an opinion, logical conviction or external knowledge, which has nothing in common with inward and true knowledge, with faith which sees the invisible. And whether we have faith or no is known to God alone. — Author’s note. ↑

**3.** Silence on the part of the Church in not rejecting a writer is of great significance; but this silence becomes a decisive sentence when the Church does not reject a decision brought against a doctrine of any sort; for in not rejecting the decision she maintains it with all her authority. — Author’s note. ↑

**4.** As infallibility in a dead faith is an error in itself, so its deadness is expressed in the fact that this infallibility is bound up with objects of inanimate nature, with a place of residence, or with dead walls, or with diocesan succession, or with a chair. But we know who it was that in the time of Christ's sufferings sat in the chair of Moses. — Author’s note. ↑

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