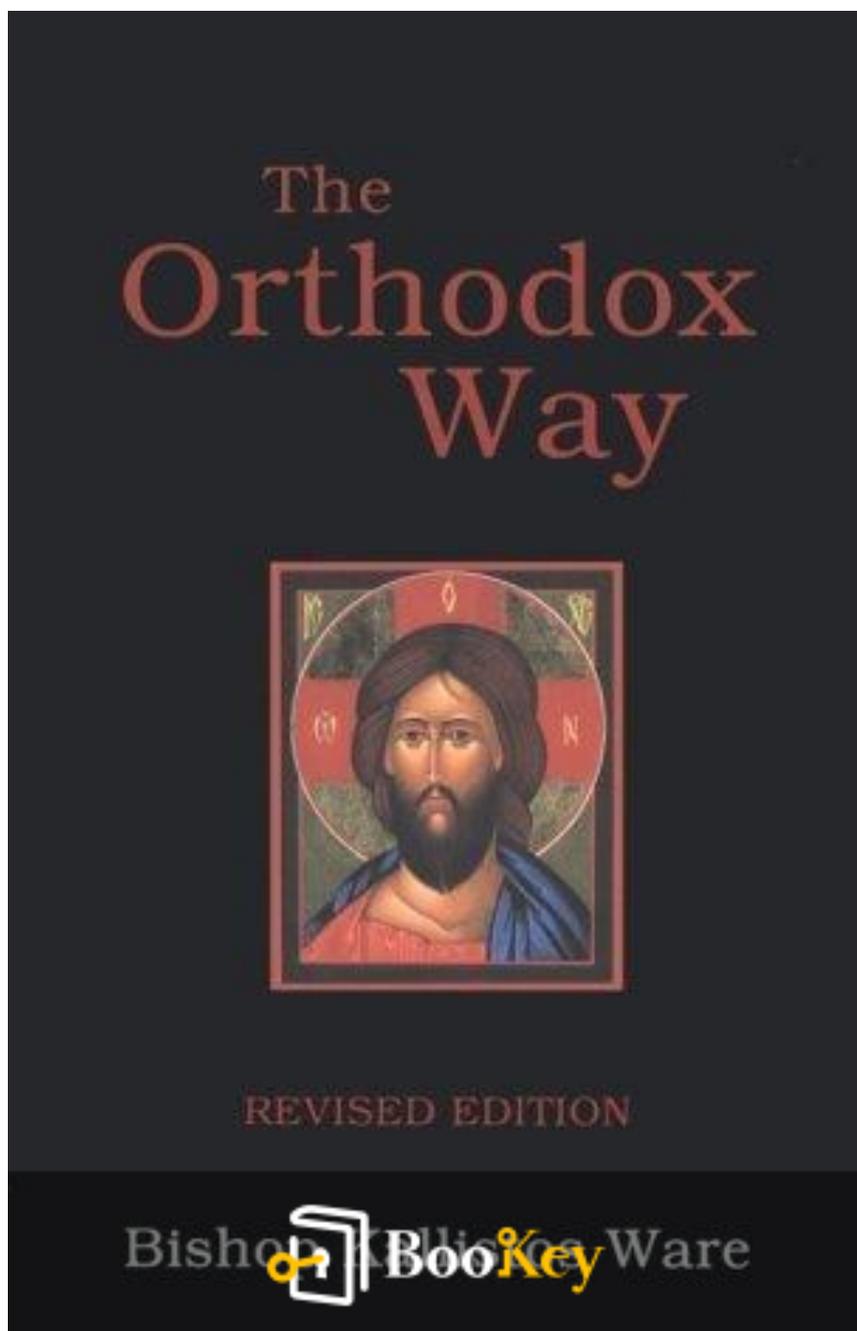


The Orthodox Way PDF (Limited Copy)

Kallistos Ware



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The Orthodox Way Summary

Exploring the Depths of Orthodox Faith and Spiritual Life

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In "The Orthodox Way," Kallistos Ware delves into the essence of Orthodox Christianity, expanding on ideas introduced in his earlier work, "The Orthodox Church." The book serves as both a theological guide and a practical manual for spiritual living, emphasizing how doctrine shapes everyday faith.

Ware begins by discussing the nature of God, presenting Him as a complex, loving entity central to Orthodox belief. He addresses age-old theological dilemmas, particularly the problem of evil: how a benevolent deity can coexist with suffering in the world. This exploration leads into a broader conversation about salvation—what it means to be saved—and highlights the deep relationship between faith and prayer in Orthodox life.

The author intertwines these concepts with insights drawn from a myriad of theologians and spiritual writers, creating a rich dialogue that elevates Orthodoxy beyond mere dogma. He illustrates that Orthodox Christianity is not just a set of beliefs, but a profound, transformative path toward divine communion. This journey is accessible to all believers, encouraging them to integrate doctrinal understanding into their daily lives, ultimately fostering a deeper spiritual connection.

In summarizing key chapters, Ware's work reveals that Orthodox

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Christianity thrives on the interplay between theology and personal experience. He conveys that true faith is lived out through prayer, participation in sacraments, and the pursuit of a virtuous life, inviting readers to consider Orthodoxy as a dynamic and engaging way to encounter God. Through this lens, "The Orthodox Way" stands as a guide for those seeking to deepen their faith and understanding of the divine.

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About the author

Kallistos Ware, originally named Timothy Ware, is an influential figure in the realm of Eastern Orthodox theology and a bishop who has made significant contributions to the understanding of Christian spirituality. Born in 1934, Ware's academic journey began at Oxford University, where he immersed himself in theological studies, eventually leading to his monastic life on Mount Athos—an esteemed center for Orthodox Christianity known for its rich spiritual heritage.

Throughout his career, Ware has authored several pivotal works, most notably "The Orthodox Way." This book serves as an accessible introduction to the depth and beauty of Orthodox Christianity, aiming to engage both Orthodox believers and those from other Christian traditions. His writing is marked by a clear articulation of complex theological concepts, reflecting a deep commitment to ecumenical dialogue—an initiative aimed at promoting unity among different Christian denominations.

Ware's contributions are not just confined to his written work; he also engages in pastoral ministry, guiding the faithful and fostering a greater understanding of Orthodox practices and beliefs. His approach combines scholarly insight with pastoral care, making his teachings resonate with both academic and lay audiences.

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In summary, Kallistos Ware stands as a bridge between traditional Eastern Orthodox theology and contemporary Christian thought, advocating for a deepened appreciation of Orthodox Christianity's mysteries and practices through his teaching, writings, and pastoral work.

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Chapter 1 Summary: GOD AS MYSTERY

GOD AS MYSTERY

Introduction to God's Otherness

God is fundamentally characterized as a profound mystery beyond human comprehension. Individuals who experiences God often feel both His immense transcendence and a deep, personal closeness. This duality plays a crucial role in spiritual understanding.

Contrasting Facts of the Divine

As one embarks on their spiritual journey, a recognition of God's "otherness" (His transcendence) becomes evident alongside His nearness (His immanence). God is portrayed as wholly beyond understanding, yet at the same time, He is intimately present in the universe, calling each person by name. This seemingly contradictory nature does not conflict; rather, it enriches the spiritual experience. The deeper one seeks the divine, the more they become aware of both God's proximity and distance.

God as Mystery

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Approaching God begins with a feeling of awe, acknowledging His deep mystery. Encountering the divine can be likened to standing at the edge of an abyss or being momentarily blinded by light—a mix of allure and the daunting unknown. Biblical figures such as Abraham and Moses exemplify this journey of faith, transitioning from familiar surroundings into the realm of the divine's mystery, ultimately leading to transformative encounters with God.

Faith in God as Person

Faith transcends mere acknowledgment of God's existence; it embodies a personal relationship filled with trust, reliance, and love. Doubts do not undermine faith; rather, they can signify a robust and evolving faith, indicating a process of grappling with belief. Genuine knowledge of God arises from love rather than intellectual assent. This relationship is characterized by mutual love and trust, fostering a deeper engagement and understanding of the divine.

Three Pointers towards God

1. **The World Around Us:** Observing the chaos and beauty in the world evokes a sense of purpose behind creation, prompting the exploration for divine meaning.
2. **The World Within Us:** Humanity's moral compass and insatiable

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quest for the infinite reveal our inherent divine nature and our fundamental questions about existence.

3. Relationships with Others: Profound interactions with others uncover shared transcendent experiences, indicating a deeper connection to something eternal and divine.

Essence and Energies of God

Orthodox theology outlines a crucial distinction between the essence of God and His energies. While God's essence remains unknowable and reflects His transcendence, His energies are manifest and accessible, demonstrating His intimacy with creation. This understanding facilitates a mystical union where believers can experience God's presence while maintaining their individuality.

Conclusion

God embodies both the inscrutable mystery that eludes our understanding and a divine presence that invites personal connection and love. Faith serves as the conduit that aligns us with the transcendent, allowing us to recognize and experience the divine presence in our daily lives, a mystery that remains simultaneously hidden and revealed in countless ways.

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Chapter 2 Summary: GOD AS TRINITY

GOD AS TRINITY

Introduction

The chapter opens with prayers that celebrate the Holy Trinity, which encompasses the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This invocation is an invitation for believers to engage in the worship of this divine unity, emphasizing the significance of each person within the Trinity.

God as Mutual Love

The Trinity presents a profound understanding of God as both unified and diverse. Rather than existing as a solitary figure, God is depicted as a community of love, with deep relational dynamics among the three persons. This rich interplay invites humanity to partake in divine love, reflecting the ultimate expression of personhood.

Three Persons in One Essence

The theological essence of the Trinity, articulated through the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople, defines God as three distinct yet fully divine

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persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who exist in one essence. Each person possesses equal divinity and plays unique roles, underscoring their unity-in-diversity, which is foundational to understanding God.

Personal Characteristics

In the Trinity, the Father serves as the source, while the Son is the divine Word incarnated in human form. The Holy Spirit represents God's active presence within believers. Their interactions are marked by mutual love and submission, highlighting both their distinct roles and their unified existence as part of the Godhead.

The Two Hands of God

This section explores key biblical events—creation, the incarnation, and Christ's baptism—illustrating the seamless collaboration of the Trinity in these divine acts. Each event showcases how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together harmoniously, emphasizing their interconnectedness in the unfolding of salvation history.

Praying the Trinity

Orthodox prayers capture the essence of the Trinity, embodying the reverence owed to God's tri-personal nature. To invoke the Trinity in prayer

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is to affirm the equality and unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, reflecting a deep-seated acknowledgment of their roles in worship.

Living the Trinity

The teachings of the Trinity extend beyond theology into everyday life, urging believers toward mutual love and service. The relational characteristics seen in the divine persons are meant to inspire human interactions within communities, emphasizing love as a fundamental principle of Christian living.

Conclusion

The chapter concludes with a reflection on God's nature, described as inherently love and community. It calls upon readers to foster deeper connections with God and one another, promoting the practical application of Trinitarian principles in daily life through love, compassion, and unity. This living out of the Trinity serves as a model for how believers are to engage with the world.

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Chapter 3 Summary: GOD AS CREATOR

Summary of "God as Creator"

Introduction

In this chapter, St. Antony presents the natural world as a divine manuscript that reveals the intricacies of God's creation. Building upon this, early Christian thinkers like Evagrius and Origen delve into the cosmos, emphasizing humanity's unique role within it as both observers and participants.

The Call to Look Beyond Ourselves

Shaw encourages individuals to transcend personal woes and appreciate the grandeur of existence. This insight complements St. John of Kronstadt's perspective on prayer, highlighting gratitude and the necessity for humanity to acknowledge God's creative hand in life.

Understanding Creation: Ex Nihilo

The chapter explains the concept of "creation ex nihilo," where God brings forth the universe from nothingness solely through His will and love. This

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act positions creation as a tangible manifestation of divine love, stressing that every element of existence has inherent significance and is intimately tied to God's purpose.

God's Ongoing Role in Creation

Creation is not a singular event but an ever-continuing process upheld by God. This idea of divine sustenance asserts that all existence depends on God's presence, contrasting with pantheism. Thus, God is distinct yet deeply engaged within His creation.

Affirmation of Goodness in Creation

Christianity declares that the entirety of creation is fundamentally good, countering dualistic beliefs that see evil as a coequal force to God. Here, evil is framed as a deficiency of good, rooted in humanity's gift of free will, which also entails moral responsibility.

Humanity: Body, Soul, and Spirit

Humans are portrayed as unique beings with both physical (body) and spiritual (soul and spirit) essence. This tripartite understanding showcases humans as integrated beings capable of moral decision-making, linking their existence to both the material world and the divine.

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Man as Microcosm and Mediator

The notion of humans as microcosms suggests that they embody the entire cosmos and act as intermediaries between the spiritual and physical realms. This special role allows humanity to uplift creation through acts of worship and gratitude, reflecting the divine nature.

Image and Likeness of God

Humans are created in God's image, which endows them with moral agency and free will. The "image" symbolizes inherent potential, whereas "likeness" represents the realization of this potential through love and community, both with God and fellow beings.

The Priest and King of Creation

Humans are described as priests and kings of creation, gifting praise back to God while collaborating in transformative acts that mirror divine creativity. This dual capacity reveals humanity's profound ability to recognize the divine in all aspects of life.

The Inner Kingdom and Self-Discovery

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The journey toward self-awareness involves uncovering the divine presence within oneself. This process necessitates spiritual purification and repentance, prompting growth in understanding and connection with God.

The Problem of Evil and Human Suffering

The existence of evil and human suffering poses significant questions about faith. Orthodox thought responds by affirming that while God permits free will—which may lead to sin—He also offers pathways for redemption and healing.

Consequences of the Fall

The chapter addresses the fall of humanity, which introduces moral and physical suffering along with estrangement from God. However, it asserts that death is not definitive but a precursor to resurrection, pointing towards renewal and restoration.

Original Sin and Its Implications

Original sin represents a collective human tendency toward wrongdoing without imparting a physical stain of guilt. It emphasizes that, while humanity is predisposed to act against good, they are not beyond redemption.

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Shared Responsibility in Humanity

Humans are depicted as interconnected beings, where individual actions resonate within the wider community. This interconnectedness calls for collective accountability, suggesting that salvation is a shared journey rather than an isolated pursuit.

God's Suffering and Compassion

Orthodox theology posits that God experiences empathy for human suffering, revealing that divine love is intricately linked to the human reality of pain, allowing for the possibility of shared experience and understanding.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the universe stands as a testament to God's creative act, with humanity playing a sacred role in offering back creation to the divine. This relationship encapsulates the vocation of human beings as co-creators, reflecting love and unity with God.

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Chapter 4: GOD AS MAN

Summary of "GOD AS MAN"

Introduction

The chapter opens by asserting that through Christ, God reconciles humanity to Himself, underlining the transformative power of seeking Jesus' love as central to Christian faith.

Experience of the Divine

The narrative explores the depth of communion with God, drawing on the works of St. Isaac the Syrian and the poetry of T.S. Eliot. These references illustrate how profound connections to the divine often emerge in periods of despair, portraying Jesus Christ as the source of solace and companionship.

Human Alienation and Divine Response

It delves into the theme of humanity's estrangement from God due to sin, emphasizing that humans alone cannot overcome this separation. The author presents the Incarnation of Christ—the moment God becomes man—as the divine initiative to heal this rift and restore humanity to Himself.

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The Jesus Prayer

An exploration of the Jesus Prayer highlights Christ's dual nature, both divine and human. This prayer exemplifies the tension between human sinfulness and divine glory, positioning Christ as the crucial mediator who bridges the gap between God and humanity.

Incarnation as an Act of Love

The Incarnation is depicted not merely as a remedy for sin but as God's eternal decision to express profound love. Through Christ's embodiment, human nature is elevated, affirming a fundamental connection between the divine and the human experience.

The Nature of Christ

Orthodox Christianity emphasizes the belief that Christ exists as fully God and fully man. This dual nature is affirmed by various Ecumenical Councils, reinforcing the notion of His single personhood. The title of Mary as Theotokos (God-bearer) is significant, indicating Christ's divine origin and genuine humanity.

Salvation through Sharing

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Salvation is framed as a relational process wherein Christ's complete identification with humanity allows individuals to partake in His divine essence. His Incarnation reconciles the realities of human suffering with the promise of divine life.

Importance of the Virgin Birth

The chapter underscores the significance of the Virgin Birth, which illustrates Christ's singular nature and divine initiative, allowing Him to be both fully human and divine. This unique origin affirms that Christ is one person rather than the combination of two separate natures.

Obedience and the Cross

The narrative emphasizes Christ's obedience, culminating in His crucifixion, which is portrayed not as a moment of defeat but as a necessary and loving act of redemption for humanity within a flawed world.

Death and Resurrection

The victory heralded by Christ's Cross is framed as an expression of love that transforms death into a source of life. His resurrection serves as confirmation of this victory, rendering death powerless and reaffirming the

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hope of eternal life.

Concluding Joy of the Resurrection

In conclusion, the chapter celebrates the joy of the Resurrection, portraying it as a foundational belief within Orthodoxy. It represents the ultimate triumph of love, inspiring faith and instilling hope within the hearts of the faithful as they navigate their spiritual journeys.

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Chapter 5 Summary: GOD AS SPIRIT

Summary of Chapters on the Holy Spirit

God as Spirit

This chapter explores the essence of God as the Holy Spirit, focusing on His vital role in bestowing joy and peace upon believers. The transformative influence of the Holy Spirit is symbolized through the imagery of open hands in prayer, depicting a posture of receptivity and an invitation for the Spirit's divine action in one's life.

The Wind and the Fire

Continuing with the theme of the Holy Spirit's elusive nature, He is likened to wind and fire, illustrating His invisible yet formidable presence. The chapter affirms the Holy Spirit as a person, coequal and coeternal with both the Father and the Son, countering any notions that diminish His significance within the Trinity.

The Spirit and the Son

This chapter delves into the deep reciprocal relationship between the Holy Spirit and Christ, highlighting their intertwined missions through pivotal events: the Annunciation, Baptism, Transfiguration, and Pentecost. Each event showcases their mutual sending's significance, reflecting a profound



unity in Divine action and collaboration.

The Pentecostal Gift

The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost encompasses three fundamental qualities: it is universally given to all believers, it encourages unity among them, and it embraces diversity within the community. This event emphasizes restored communication and understanding, as all baptized individuals are called to embody the Spirit.

Fathers in the Spirit and Fools

Two key figures in the Orthodox tradition are presented: the elder, or spiritual father, and the fool in Christ. The elder offers wisdom and guidance rooted in prayer and spiritual maturity, while the fool in Christ exemplifies radical humility, often challenging societal expectations. Both play critical roles as instruments of the Holy Spirit, helping navigate the intricacies of Christian life.

Become What You Are

This chapter underscores the intrinsic nobility granted to all baptized individuals, who are anointed with the Holy Spirit. It calls for an awakening to the Spirit's presence and influence, emphasizing the manifestation of the Spirit's fruits—love, joy, and peace—in everyday life.

An Invocation to the Holy Spirit

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The chapter concludes with heartfelt meditative invocations to the Holy Spirit, expressing a deep yearning for His presence, enlightenment, and transformative power in believers' lives. It serves as a reminder to recognize and engage with the Spirit's actions, which shape personal relationships with God.

In summary, these chapters weave a rich tapestry of the Holy Spirit's role within the Trinity and the lives of believers, inviting readers to embrace the Spirit's gifts and experience His transformative power.

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Chapter 6 Summary: GOD AS PRAYER

God as Prayer: Summary

Introduction to Prayer

At the heart of life and Orthodoxy lies prayer, regarded as fundamental for maintaining order and purpose. Abba Agathon emphasizes that prayer, considered one of the most challenging virtues to practice, is often obstructed by negative spiritual influences known as demonic forces. This sets the stage for understanding the significance of prayer in achieving spiritual maturity.

Three Stages of Spiritual Growth

The spiritual journey, as articulated by early Church Fathers, unfolds in three interconnected stages:

- 1. Praktiki (Practice of the Virtues):** This initial phase focuses on repentance and aims to purify the heart through virtuous living and adherence to spiritual guidance.
- 2. Physiki (Contemplation of Nature):** In this stage, individuals begin to recognize God's presence in the natural world, fostering a deeper appreciation of the Creator.

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3. **Theologia (Contemplation of God):** This final stage represents an intimate and direct experience of God's divine love, transcending ordinary understanding.

These stages are not rigidly sequential; rather, they often overlap, reflecting the multifaceted nature of the spiritual journey.

Three Presuppositions for the Journey

To navigate this spiritual journey effectively, three essential presuppositions must be embraced:

1. **Membership in the Church:** True spiritual life flourishes in community, where salvation is experienced within the Church's collective support.
2. **Life in the Sacraments:** The sacraments are vital for spiritual growth, forming the foundation of the Christian experience and enabling deeper connections with God.
3. **Engagement with Scripture:** Understanding the Bible is crucial, but it must occur within the context of the Church's tradition, emphasizing the importance of communal interpretation.

Active Life and Contemplative Life

Balancing an active life with a contemplative approach is crucial in the

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spiritual pathway. The active life demands effort and struggle, requiring virtues such as repentance, vigilance, discernment, and safeguarding the heart from harmful passions. Contemplation offers a way to appreciate nature's beauty while also recognizing God's omnipresence in all aspects of life.

The Path to Union with God

Transitioning from an active lifestyle to a more contemplative state involves cultivating stillness. This shift encourages individuals to listen more attentively in prayer, rather than merely reciting words. The Jesus Prayer emerges as an essential practice, enabling focused and loving attention toward God, and facilitating a deep state of prayerfulness.

The Nature of Union with God

The union with God is defined by participation in His divine energies while maintaining the distinction between Creator and creature. This experience is often represented by divine light and darkness, capturing the paradox of encountering God. It stresses both His ineffable essence and the life-changing impact of prayerful engagement.

Conclusion

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The journey to God through prayer is fraught with challenges that demand humility and deliberate effort. It navigates both active and contemplative dimensions of spiritual life, aiming for a profound and transformative union with the divine. This process not only enriches individual faith but also connects one deeply with the community of believers.

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