



Life after Death according to the Orthodox Tradition

By Jean-Claude Larchet

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Life after Death according to the Orthodox Tradition presents the teachings from Orthodox Church tradition. On a few points, these teachings differ significantly from those of the Catholic and Protestant confessions. Some divergences between eastern and western traditions have existed since the fifth century, but have been considerably accentuated since the twelfth century, when the West, to borrow an expression from the historian Jacques Le Goff, 'invented Purgatory.' The Latin tradition is, however, in its roots, in perfect agreement with the eastern tradition. Also, although in our references we give the greatest space to the Greek Fathers, we will surely cite convergent or complementary teachings and testimonies of the Latin Fathers and hagiographers of antiquity. We hope in this way to make better known to Orthodox the teachings of their own often scattered about and poorly known tradition, and also to acquaint Catholic or Protestant readers with teachings unknown to them or which long ago ceased being within the compass of their faith, but which nevertheless belong to the rich patrimony of an ancient Christian tradition which, in its origins, is or should be common to all.

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Life after Death according to the Orthodox Tradition By Jean-Claude Larchet Bibliography

- Rank: #1685473 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Orthodox Research Institute
- Published on: 2012-05-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .78" w x 5.98" l, 1.12 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 348 pages



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