

The Shorter Catechism
of
The Syrian Orthodox Church

Moran Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum

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Dedicated to the blessed memory of

Moran Ignatius Aphrem I
(AD 1887 - 1957)

**The Shorter Catechism
of
The Syrian Orthodox Church**

Moran Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum

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Preface

The Shorter Catechism of the Syrian Orthodox Church authored by Mor Severius Aphrem Barsoum, the then Archbishop of Syria and Lebanon (later, the Patriarch of Antioch), is an exemplary work which succinctly presents the basic tenets of the Syrian Orthodox Church. This book was first published in Arabic in 1930. His Eminence Mor Athanasius Yeshu Samuel, the then Archbishop of Jerusalem and Transjordan, published it in English in 1950. The book was reprinted in 1994 by the Archdiocese of the United States of America.

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19 March 2016 Corepiscopo (Dr.) K. Mani
Rajan
Feast of St. Osthatheos Sleeba

SECTION ONE

THE TRUTHS
WE ARE REQUIRED TO BELIEVE

INTRODUCTION

On Christian Doctrine

Q – What is Christian doctrine?

A – Christian doctrine is the knowledge which leads man to a true understanding of the Christian religion and its practices.

Q – Of what benefit is Christian doctrine?

A – It teaches the Christian the origins of his faith, the duties it lays upon him, apart from which there is no salvation. All Christians must take this instruction.

Q – What is the origin of this doctrine?

A – The origin of this doctrine is the Holy Bible, as expounded by Holy Church and her honored traditions.

Q – Who may teach Christian doctrine?

A – Christian doctrine is taught us by Holy Church, her Apostles, Teachers and Pastors, who in turn are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Q – What are the bases of Christian doctrine?

A – They are three in number: namely, the truths we are required to believe; the means of grace we must use; and the works we must practice.

CHAPTER ONE

On the Existence of God Almighty and his Attributes

Q.- Who created this world?

A.- Almighty God.

Q.- What proofs have we of the existence of Almighty God?

A.- The proofs of the existence of Almighty God are to be found in the teachings of the Holy Bible and in our intelligence with which we are naturally enlightened. Nature around us leads us to infer the existence of an Allwise Creator, who is Almighty God.

Q.- What is God?

A.- God is a Spirit, pure and unalloyed who was from eternity, complete, self-existent and the prime cause of all existent things.

Q.- What does this statement mean?

A.- This statement means that Almighty God is, is invisible, is not dependent on the senses, is free of all material things and their attributes, had no beginning and has no ending forever.

Q.- Can man comprehend this?

A.- We cannot comprehend God in His essence and

true nature; we can only comprehend Him by reason of His being, His attributes and His works.

Q.- What are the attributes of Almighty God?

A.- They are: He is One, from all eternity and to all eternity, lives by His own power alone. Almighty, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Allwise, Holy Just, Merciful, Self-sufficient, great in goodness and love.

CHAPTER TWO

On the Trinity and the Oneness of God

Q.- What is the Trinity and Oneness of God?

A.- We mean by this that God on high is one God, subsisting in three separate persons called the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Q.- Is each one of the three Persons God?

A.- Yes, and they are all equal in their Godhead.

Q.- Are not the three Persons three Gods?

A.- No, they are One God, for they are of one Essence, of one Godhead, of one Nature, have one Will, one Work and one Lordship.

Q.- What are the separate aspects of the Three Persons?

A.- The special aspect of the First Person is His Fatherhood; that of the Second Person, His Sonship, and that of the Third Person, His Procession. It is thus that we distinguish among the Three Persons.

CHAPTER THREE

On Creation

Q.- What is Creation?

A.- By creation we mean that all things that are were brought into being by the Divine power from naught.

Q.- In how many days did God create the world?

A.- In six days.

Q.- What did God create on the First Day?

A.- On the First Day the heavens and the earth were created, still engulfed by the waters, and light also was created and a division made between light and darkness.

Q.- What was created on the Second Day?

A.- On the Second Day was created the Firmament, that is, the visible heavens.

Q.- What did God make on the Third Day?

A.- On the Third Day God gathered the waters into one place and caused the earth to appear clothed with grass and trees.

Q.- And what did God make on the Fourth Day?

A.- God created the Sun, the Moon and the Stars.

Q.- And what did God create on the Fifth Day?

A.- On the fifth day God made the fish, the reptiles and the creatures of the sea.

Q.- What did God do on the Sixth Day?

A.- God commanded the earth and it brought forth animal creatures, cattle and beasts and creeping things. After this He created Man.

Q.- What did God do when He had finished His work of creation?

A.- God rested from His work on the Seventh Day.

Q.- Why did God create the heaven and the earth and all that are in them?

A.- He created them for His glory and our happiness.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the Angels

Q.- Who are the Angels?

A.- The Angels are spiritual elements, intelligent and perfect, whom God created for His glory and service.

Q.- What is the nature of Angels?

A.- Angels are not subject in any fashion to the limitations of corporeal matter or human imperfection, and are superior to mankind in their knowledge, understanding, purity and power.

Q.- What functions do the Angels perform?

A.- Their work is to praise God, to announce to mankind the will of God, to watch over men and to lead them in the path of good. Every believer has his own angel, called his "guardian angel".

Q.- How Many ranks of Angels are there?

A.- There are Nine, namely, Seraphim, Cherubim, Rulers, Lords, Powers, Potentates, Chiefs, Archangels, and Angels.

CHAPTER FIVE

On Evil Spirits

Q.- Who are the Evil Spirits?

A.- Evil Spirits or Devils are an order of angels who rebelled against their Creator through pride, and who fell with their Chief to the lowest depths of hell.

Q.- How are the Evil Spirits employed?

A.- Evil Spirits make dire warfare against mankind, harmfully seducing them by all kinds of temptation to sin.

Q.- Can an Evil Spirit compel a man to commit sin?

A.- No, it can never do this, it may only craftily deceive him.

Q.- Do we have a sign by which we can cast out Evil Spirits?

A.- Yes, we have the Sign of the Holy Cross.

CHAPTER SIX

On Man

Q.- What is Man?

A.- Man is a corporeal creature endowed with an intelligent soul in a body formed from the dust of the earth.

Q.- What is Man's soul?

A.- Man's soul is his intangible, self-consistent spiritual essential being, endowed with intelligence, the power of speech, knowledge and life. It is Immortal, that is, as all other spiritual beings, not subject to death.

Q.- What is Man's body?

A.- Man's body consists of tangible matter, composed of several elements. It is subject to death and decay like other bodies.

Q.- Who was the First Man?

A.- The First Man was Adam, and the first Woman was Eve, the father and mother of the human race.

Q.- Where did God place our First Parents?

A.- God caused them to dwell in the paradise of Eden, and gave them authority over all other creatures on the earth.

Q.- In what estate was Man created?

A.- Man was created righteous, holy, eternal, complete in knowledge, free, and able to distinguish between good and evil.

Q.- Did Man remain in this estate?

A.- No, he fell from his high estate by eating of the forbidden tree, thus disobeying the divine command, and bringing upon himself divine punishment.

Q.- What punishment did God mete out to our First Parents?

A.- God condemned them to death and cast them out of Paradise into the sorrows of earth, withdrawing from them His grace. They fell prey to ignorance and the lust of sin, and came under bondage to Satan, taking with them in their fall the whole family of mankind.

Q.- Did God abandon man?

A.- No, He showed mercy on him, and promised him a Saviour that would come.

CHAPTER SEVEN

On the Mystery of the Incarnation

Q.- What is the mystery of the Incarnation?

A.- The mystery of the Incarnation is that the Only Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, took to himself a body and became man.

Q.- How was this mystery consummated?

A.- When the time came for the Saviour to appear, God sent the Angel, Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce to her that she was to be with child by the Holy Spirit, at which time the Holy Spirit came upon her and cleansed her of all natural impurity, filling her with His grace. Then the Only Son of God came down and entered her Immaculate womb, and took to himself a body through her, thus becoming a perfect Man with a perfect soul. After nine months He was born of her and her virginity was maintained contrary to the laws of nature.

Q.- By what name do we call God Incarnate?

A.- His name is Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q.- What do we believe concerning the Lord Jesus Christ?

A.- We believe that His true Godhead and His true Manhood were in Him essentially united, He being

one Lord and one Son and that after the union took place in Him He had but one nature incarnate, was one Person, had one Will and one Work.

Q.- What distinguishes this union?

A.- It is specially marked by being a natural union of persons, free of all separateness, intermixture, confusion, mingling, change and transformation.

Q.- How many births did Christ have?

A.- Christ had two births: A birth from eternity from the eternal Father, and a temporal birth in the body from the Virgin.

Q.- Where was Christ born in the body?

A.- He was born in the town of Bethlehem.

Q.- Is the Virgin called the Mother of God?

A.- Yes, she is called the Mother of God, because she gave birth to Christ, God truly incarnate.

Q.- Did the Virgin maintain her virginity after her delivery?

A.- Yes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Work of Christ the Lord and the Mystery of Redemption

Q. -When did Christ begin His work?

A.- When He reached the age of thirty years, He was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. He then withdrew into the wilderness and fasted forty days and forty nights, overcoming Satan, who tried to have Him commit (sins of) gluttony, pride and avarice.

Q.- What did Christ do following that?

A.- He showed Himself to the world, choosing Twelve Apostles and Seventy-two preachers, and began to proclaim the Gospel, teaching men the way of perfection, and performing wondrous miracles.

Q.- What obstacles did He meet in His preaching?

A.- The Chief Priests of the Jews and the Scribes and Pharisees opposed Him because He rebuked their evil manner of life. They lay in wait for Him to do Him to death. After He had finished the Paschal Supper, and had committed the New Covenant to His Apostles, He was delivered into their hands by the treachery of Judas Iscariot.

They passed false judgment upon Him, flogged Him and maltreated Him. Then they took Him out to the Hill of Golgotha, where they crucified Him between two thieves. Thus He tasted death by His own will, and committed His spirit into the hands of His Heavenly Father.

Q.- When did Christ give us the New Covenant?

A.- He gave us the New Covenant on the Night of His Passion, that is, at Supper on the Thursday of Holy Passover.

CHAPTER NINE

On the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ

Q.- When did Christ die?

A.- Christ died at the ninth hour on Great Friday.

Q.- In what manner was the death of Christ?

A.- The death of Christ was the separation of His soul from His body, but His deity did not at any time leave either His body or His soul.

Q.- What benefit did Christ confer upon us by His death for us?

A.- Christ by His death for us conferred upon us salvation from eternal death and reconciliation with His Heavenly Father.

Q.- Did miracles take place at the time of Christ's death?

A.- Yes, the sun was darkened and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain; the rocks were shattered and the graves opened, and the bodies of many saints were raised to life.

Q.- Where was the body of Christ buried?

A.- It was buried in a new tomb cut out of the rock, and guards were mounted over it.

Q.- Whither did the soul of Christ go after His death?

A.- The soul of Christ went down into the Abyss and set free the souls of the righteous who had died trusting in Him, translating them to Paradise.

Q.- In what manner did Christ rise?

A.- His soul united with His body and He rose from the tomb alive and glorious. This took place at dawn on Sunday.

Q.- How did Christ set a seal on His work of salvation?

A.- After His resurrection Christ frequented with His disciples for forty days. He then took them to the Mount of Olives and blessed them, and sent them out to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world. He also promised them to establish His church after assuring them that the Holy Spirit would be sent to them. He then ascended into heaven, where He is now seated in glory at the right hand of His Heavenly Father, to make intercession for us.

Q.- On what day did Christ ascend into heaven?

A.- He ascended on Thursday, now called Ascension Thursday.

CHAPTER TEN

On the Holy Spirit

Q.- Who is the Holy Spirit?

A.- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Spirit of Truth, proceeding from the Father.

Q.- Is this procession a thing peculiar to the Holy Spirit?

A.- Yes, this procession is peculiar to the Holy Spirit and of His essential being, for by it He is distinguished from the Father and the Son.

Q. -What is the authority of the Holy Spirit?

A. - His authority consists in His being equal with the Father and the Son in His being, essence, power, authority and will.

Q. -Did the Holy Spirit appear in visible, tangible form?

A. - Yes, He appeared in the likeness of a dove at the time of Christ's baptism, and in the shape of a tongue of fire when He came upon the Apostles and endowed them with his gifts.

Q. -How many gifts of the Holy spirit are there, and what are they?

A. - They are seven, namely, Wisdom, Understanding,

Counsel, Power, Knowledge, Godliness, and the Fear of the Lord.

Q.- In what does the operation of these gifts appear?

A.- These gifts guide the Christian in the way of perfection, establish him in faith and grace, and adorn him with virtues.

Q. -How may we acquire these gifts?

A. -We acquire these gifts when we cleanse our hearts by faith and repentance, and by worship and good works; in particular when we partake of the Blessed Sacraments.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On the Church

Q.- What is the Church?

A.- The Church is the body of true believers in Christ.

Q.- Who is the Head of the Church?

A.- The Head of the Church is Our Lord God Jesus Christ.

Q.- To whom did Christ commit the care of His Church after He ascended into Heaven?

A.- He committed the care of His Church to His Holy Apostles, who delegated it to their successors, the Bishops duly appointed, who received from them the power of loosing and of binding, and of organizing the Church.

Q.- Who is the Chief Bishop of our Orthodox Church?

A.- The Chief Bishop of our Holy Orthodox Church is our Patriarch of Antioch.

Q.- Did the Apostles not ordain another order in the Church?

A.- Yes, they ordained the order of Priests and Deacons.

Q.- How many special attributes of the Christian Church are there, and what are they?

A.- The special attributes of the true Christian Church are four: namely, her Oneness, her catholicity, her Holiness and her Apostolic character.

Q.- Are Believers bound to obey the Holy Church?

A.- Yes, they are bound to obey the Holy Church, for there is no salvation to anyone outside her.

Q.- Who are those outside the Church?

A.- These are heretics, the outcasts, the excommunicated and infidels.

Q.- Did Christ promise that he would be with His Church?

A.- Yes, He promised His Church that He would be with her even unto the end of the world.

CHAPTER TWELVE

On the Creed

Q. -Recite the Creed.

- A.- (1) We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
- (2) And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, the begotten from the 'Father before all the worlds, Light of light, Very God of Very God, be- gotten not made, Consubstantial with the Father by whom all things were made.
- (3) Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven and was incar- nate by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and was made man:
- (4) and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered, died and was buried:
- (5) and the third day rose according to His wish.
- (6) And ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the Right Hand of the Father:
- (7) And He shall come again with great glory to judge the quick and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

- (8) And We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the Prophets and Apostles.
- (9) And in one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
- (10) We confess one Baptism for the remission of sins,
- (11) And we look for the Resurrection of the dead;
- (12) and a new life in the world to come, Amen.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

On Human Chastisements And Rewards

Q.- How many rewards and chastisements of man are there, and what are they?

A.- There are four: 'namely, death, the resurrection, the judgment and eternal rewards and punishments.

Q.- What is death?

A.- Death is the departure of the soul from the body.

Q.- What is the resurrection?

A.- The resurrection is the return of souls to their bodies, to be reunited by the power of their Creator. Thus they become spiritual and not subject to death, being set free from bodily needs such as eating, drinking, marriage and apparel.

Q.- What is the Judgment?

A.- The Judgment takes place at Christ's second coming, when men shall give an account of all they have done, whether it be good or evil, and Christ will mete out their eternal rewards.

Q.- When does the Judgment take place?

A.- The Judgment takes place at the end of the world.

Q.- What are eternal rewards?

A.- We mean by this that Christ will reward the good with eternal bliss, and punish the evil with the eternal pains of hell.

Q.- What is eternal bliss? ,

A.- By this we mean the eternal life of happiness which the good will enjoy, crowned with glory in heaven for ever.

Q.- What is hell?

A.- Hell is the abode of punishment which burns with fire not of this world, where sinners and evil spirits undergo everlasting punishment.

Q.- Is there any distinction among the rewards of the righteous and the chastisements of the wicked?

A.- Yes, everyone will receive reward or punishment in accordance with his deeds.

Q.- Where will souls go before the resurrection?

A.- The souls of the righteous will go to Paradise, where they will enjoy the measure of glory which is meted out to them in Heaven; but the souls of the wicked will go down to the lowest abyss, where they will be tortured by contemplation of the punishment in hell which will overtake them.

Q.- Do the dead benefit by prayers said on their behalf?

A.- Yes, the repentant dead, who rely on salvation through Christ, do benefit by prayers and holy sacrifices, and the good deeds offered on their behalf by the living. But as for those who

stubbornly remain in their sins, they are benefitted
not one whit.

SECTION TWO

ON THE MEANS OF GRACE
WE ARE REQUIRED TO USE

CHAPTER ONE

On Divine Grace

Q.- What is divine grace?

A.- Divine grace is a heavenly gift freely bestowed on man by God in His bounty and mercy and by the merits of Christ, by which he is sustained in working out his salvation.

Q.- To whom does God grant His grace?

A.- God grants His grace to all men, but some are obedient to it and it dwells in them, while others rebel against it. For man is created free and may do good or evil by his own will and power.

Q.- How many kinds of divine grace are there?

A.- There are two kinds of divine grace: present grace and justifying grace.

Q.- What is present grace?

A.- By this we mean temporary help by which God aids man in doing good and avoiding evil.

Q.- What is justifying grace?

A.- Justifying grace is a quality dwelling within the soul imparting righteousness to it, that is, it makes man holy and worthy of eternal life.

Q.- By what means does God impart to us His grace?

A.- God imparts His grace to us through prayer and the Holy Sacraments.

CHAPTER TWO

On Prayer

Q.- What is prayer?

A.- Prayer is an act of the believer calling upon God Most High in spiritual language, as he worships Him, renders Him thanks, and beseeches His grace and mercy.

Q.- Is prayer a duty?

A.- Yes, prayer is our first duty. For the most part it is obligatory, and is always incumbent upon us.

Q.- What are the conditions of true prayer?

A.- The conditions of true prayer are that it should be coupled with strong faith and firm hope, and should proceed from love to God and one's neighbor. It should come from a humble heart, be inspired by purity of motive and by thoughts free from all trivialities. As we pray we should meditate and seek to understand the words we utter.

Q.- What prayers are acceptable?

A.- Prayer is acceptable to God if it is confined to seeking the glory of God and His Kingdom, the salvation of the soul and of one's neighbor, and earthly necessities, at all times asking for God's will to be done.

Q.- What are the special times for prayer?

A.- The special times for prayer are morning and evening, especially on Sundays, on feast days, and when in temptation.

Q.- Which is better, private or public prayer?

A.- Public prayer is more excellent than private prayer.

CHAPTER THREE

On the Lord's Prayer

Q.- What is the Lord's Prayer?

A.- This is the prayer which the Lord Christ gave His disciples.

Q.- Say the Lord's, Prayer.

A.- Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Q. -Expound the meaning of this prayer.

A.- We call God our Father for we are His sons by grace, and have become brethren of His well- beloved Son. We beseech Him to grant us holiness of soul and body, that His Name may be hallowed thereby. We beseech Him also that His love may take possession of our hearts and that He may grant us to reign with Him in heaven, humbly subjecting our wills to His. Then we ask for our spiritual necessities, namely, the bread of the Holy Sacrifice and its inspired words, as well

as our physical necessities, by which is meant our requirements of food. We ask God to forgive us our sins, after we have first forgiven in the name of Christ anyone who has sinned against us. We ask Him to keep us from the Evil One and from sin. For He is our Almighty King. The word Amen means: So be it.

CHAPTER FOUR

On Obligatory Prayer

Q.- In what does obligatory public prayer consist?

A.- Obligatory public prayer consists in crossing oneself, placing the end of the first finger of the right hand on one's forehead, then on the chest, then on the left shoulder and the right shoulder, in the customary manner, and saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, One True God, Amen." Then one should say, in a kneeling posture: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. The Heavens and the Earth are full of thy praises. Glory be in the highest. Blessed is He who comes and will come in the name of the Lord. Glory be in the highest." Then one would say the "Trisagion" prayer; and close with the Lord's prayer. This completes a "Kauma" of prayer.

Q. - Say the "Trisagion".

A. - Holy art thou, O God. Holy art thou, Almighty One. Holy art thou, O Immortal. O thou who was crucified for our sakes, have mercy upon us. (This must be said three times in three prostrations crossing oneself). Then: "O our Lord, have mercy upon us. Our Lord, show us thy compassion and be merciful unto us. O our Lord, receive our worship and our prayers, and have mercy upon

us. Blessed be thou, O God. Blessed be thou, O Creator. Glory be to thee, O Christ the King who showeth mercy on Thy sinful servants.

Q.- To whom is this prayer directed?

A.- It is directed to the Incarnate Word, in whose name and by whose hand we raise our prayers to God the Father.

Q.- How many Kaumas must we observe daily in obligatory prayer?

A.- We must observe fifteen Kaumas dally in obligatory prayer. Ten of these are in the morning and five in the evening.

Q.- May the worshipper use prayers other than these?

A.- Yes, the worshipper may recite the psalms and the prayers of the Holy Fathers. He may also hail the Virgin Mary, beseeching her intercession and that of the saints.

CHAPTER FIVE

On the Sacraments

Q.- What is a Sacrament as understood by the Church?

A.- It is a tangible sign designated by the Lord Christ to proclaim divine grace, which He gave for our sanctification.

Q.- What are the Sacraments of the Church?

A.- The Sacraments of the Church are: Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Repentance, the Priesthood, anointing of the Sick and Marriage.

Q.- What are the necessary conditions of a perfect Sacrament?

A.- There are three such: namely, the tangible, material things which must be taken; the essential expressions which must be employed; and the persons appointed to administer the Sacrament. The first are called the Material Elements of the Sacrament; the second the Form, and the third the Administering Priests.

Q.- Who are appointed to practice the Sacraments?

A.- They are the Bishops, the Priests, and those receiving the Sacraments, who are the believers only.

Q.- Are all these Sacraments necessary to salvation?

A.- No, but four of them are very necessary to salvation. These are Baptism, Confirmation, Repentance and the Holy Eucharist.

Q.- Is the reception of the Sacraments limited?

A.- Yes, Baptism, Confirmation and the Priesthood may be received only once. But this is not so with the other Sacraments.

CHAPTER SIX

On Baptism

Q.- What is Baptism?

A.- Baptism is the mystery of the Second Birth by water and the Holy Spirit, for the expurgation of sins, for endowment with the life of grace, and with the precious inheritance of sons to everlasting life.

Q.- How does one prepare himself to receive Baptism?

A.- By Repentance and Faith.

Q.- How is Baptism given?

A.- In Baptism the Believer is plunged in (natural) water three times, and is christened in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the appropriate prayer being said also,

Q.- What does the Believer promise at his Baptism?

A.- He denounces Satan, his allurements, his deeds and followers; and declares his belief in the Lord Christ and His divine teachings, and in His Father and in the Holy Spirit.

Q.- Recite these promises.

A.- "I denounce Satan and all his hosts and powers, likewise his allurements and his followers; and I trust in Thee, O Christ God, in Thy divine

teachings, with which Thou didst inspire the Prophets, Apostles and Teachers. I believe in Thee, and in Thy Father, and in Thy living Holy Spirit.

Q.- Why does the Believer at his Baptism acquire a Godfather?

A.- This is so that the latter may make the promises required at Holy Baptism in the Believer's name; and from that time on the God-father is required to instruct the Believer in the duties of his faith and in the practices of Christianity.

Q.- When is the Sacrament of Baptism received?

A.- The Sacrament of Baptism is taken in infancy, lest death should overtake the child and he be deprived of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER SEVEN

On Confirmation (Holy Chrism)

Q.- What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

A.- The Sacrament of Confirmation consists in anointing with holy oil and sweet-smelling perfumes, which confer upon the anointed the gifts of the Holy Spirit enabling him to stand firm in the faith and in power to overcome Satan.

Q.- When is this Sacrament administered?

A.- This Sacrament is administered immediately after Baptism.

Q.- What is required in order to receive this Sacrament?

A.- The person who receives Confirmation must be pure of soul and of body, and if he has reached the age of discretion he must have become acquainted with the chief aspects of the Christian Sacraments.

Q.- When is the Holy Chrism blessed and at whose hand?

A.- The Holy Chrism is solemnly blessed on the Holy Thursday at the hand of the Patriarch of Antioch.

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist (*Qurmono*)

Q.- What is Holy Eucharist?

A.- Holy Eucharist is a divine mystery in which the true body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ is encountered in the form of bread and wine.

Q.- When did Christ establish this Sacrament?

A.- Christ established this Sacrament on Passover Thursday on the night of His suffering when He took bread and wine and blessed them, with thanksgiving, and broke the bread, giving them to His Apostles, saying, "Take, eat, this is my body and drink, this is my blood of the New Covenant. Do this in remembrance of me." The Holy Apostles handed this down to their successors, the Bishops and Priests.

Q.- When does this miraculous sanctification take place?

A.- This miraculous sanctification, namely that the bread and the wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ, takes place at divine Eucharist.

Q.- How can this be, seeing we behold the bread and the wine still unchanged after their sanctification?

A.- Even though the colour, shape and taste of the bread and wine appear to us to lie unchanged after their sanctification, we see with our spiritual eyes in faith that the sanctified bread is the body of Christ indeed, and that the sanctified wine is His blood indeed.

Q.- Is it true that the smallest particle of the bread and wine is truly transmuted into the body and blood of Christ?

A.- Yes.

Q.- Why did Christ appoint this Sacrament?

A.- Christ appointed this Sacrament to make a sacrificial offering of Himself to God His Father in our stead, and to give us spiritual sustenance which we could assimilate and live thereby.

Q.- What is the purpose of the Eucharist?

A.- The purpose of the Eucharist is to glorify God, to render Him thanks, and to beseech Him to grant us His mercy and pardon for the living and the dead.

CHAPTER NINE

On Receiving Holy Eucharist

Q.- What is meant by receiving Holy Eucharist?

A.- It is partaking of the body and blood of Christ as spiritual nourishment, and as a pledge of the life to come.

Q. - What effect does Eucharist have on the soul?

A.- It sanctifies it and reduces its fleshly desires, conferring great grace upon it, and making it worthy of the Kingdom.

Q.- What are the conditions to be observed in Eucharist?

A.- There are five conditions to be observed: first, the communicant must have confessed his sins and repented; second, he must be able to give a reasoned account of the Christian Sacraments; third, he must understand the value of this Sacrament and receive it in faith, hope and love, and in a proper state of solemnity and preparedness; fourth, he must have fasted since midnight; fifth, he must be clean in body and in apparel.

Q.- What of the person who receives Eucharist unworthily?

A.- Any person who dares to receive the Eucharist

while still in sin will be accounted as doing violence to the body and blood of the Lord, and shall bring judgment on himself.

Q.- Are we required to take Eucharist of both sorts?

A.- Yes, and we must hear the Eucharist before communicating.

Q.- What must we do before communicating?

A.- The communicant should contemplate the magnitude of this Mystery and in the light of its truth renew his faith in his heart, with strong desire to partake, and should meanwhile recite the prescribed prayer. Then he should approach the Table and reverently stand before it to receive the sacred elements.

Q.- What should he do after Communicating?

A.- He should think on the wondrous Mystery, with thanks to Christ for His grace, and pray the prescribed prayer. He should also sanctify the day by reading sacred books, refraining from all that is inappropriate, such as bathing and so forth.

CHAPTER TEN

On The Sacrament Of Repentance

Q.- What is Repentance?

A.- It is a Holy Sacrament instituted by Christ for the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism.

Q.- When did Christ institute this Sacrament?

A.- Christ Instituted this Sacrament when he conferred upon His Apostles power to forgive sins or cause them to be retained, and they in turn entrusted this to the Bishops and Priests.

Q.- How many conditions are there in Repentance, and what are they?

A.- In Repentance there are three conditions: namely, being sorry for one's sins, confession of them, and obedience to the law.

Q.- What is Repentance?

A.- Repentance is contrition of heart, by which the penitent sinner is grieved that he aroused the wrath of God by his sins.

Q.- What are the special conditions of Repentance?

A.- The special conditions of Repentance are that it should be sincere, complete, coming from the depths of the heart, omit no kind of sin, and be

accompanied by lofty feeling. The penitent should hate sin, and firmly determine never to fall into it again.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On Confession

Q.- What is Confession?

A.- Confession is the declaration of a repentant sinner in the presence of an accredited Priest that he desires to be freed from his sins.

Q.- What must the penitent declare concerning his sins?

A.- The penitent must admit all his sins, great and small, one by one, telling their number, sort and circumstance. If he should inadvertently omit a sin, he must confess it as soon as it returns to mind.

Q.- How must one prepare for Confession?

A.- The penitent must ask God's grace to help him, and then examine his conscience carefully, recalling to mind his sins against God and his neighbour and himself, and repent of them with full purpose never to return to them. He then should simply, truthfully and reverently confess them to a lawful Priest, a man of discretion, who can be entrusted with secrets, and is bent on guiding the penitent rightly. And the penitent must submit to the appropriate injunction.

Q.- What if the penitent should conceal a sin?

A.- If the penitent should conceal a sin knowingly, he is committing a very great sin, and it is incumbent

upon him to correct his wrong confession by a new and true confession.

Q.- What must the penitent do after Confession?

A.- The penitent should render thanks to God for His gracious pardon, and fulfill the prescribed injunction, which is appropriate for the correction of the contemptuous sin he has committed. He must replace his evil ways by good, and practice repentance and virtue by his deeds.

Q.- How should he fulfill the Injunction?

A.- He shall fulfill the Injunction towards God by prayer, fasting and alms-giving, and towards his neighbour by making good the harm done to his person, his good name, his money and so forth.

Q.- Recite the Confession.

A.- I make my confession to God the Father Almighty, and to His Well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, in the presence of Our Lady the Virgin Mary and all Angels, Prophets, Apostles and Evangelists, and confess in the faith of the three Sacred Councils of Nicea, Constantine and Ephesus. Trusting in the honorable priestly authority conferred upon you, my father priest, by which you bind and retain sins: that I have sinned with my inner and outer faculties, in thought, word and deed. My sin is very grievous, and I repent of it. fully purposing never to return to it again. And I pray you by your priestly authority to deliver me from all my sins that I may obtain forgiveness. Amen.

CHAPTER TWELVE

On the Mystery of Priesthood

Q.- What is the priesthood?

A.- The priesthood is a mystery which confers upon him who receives it the right to administer the Sacraments of the Church and fill its offices, and to guide believers into the way of salvation.

Q.- When did Christ institute this mystery?

A.- Christ instituted this mystery on Holy Sacramental Thursday.

Q.- Who administers the mystery of the priesthood?

A.- The Chief Priest, that is, the Bishop.

Q.- How many special orders are there in the priesthood and what are they?

A.- The special orders in the Priesthood are three: namely, deacon, priest, and bishop. And to each of these there are several ranks.

Q.- What are the chief conditions affecting a priest?

A.- They are that the priest must be godly, free from legal disqualification, physical and spiritual blemishes , and he must be known for his godly life, knowledge, wisdom and zeal for the salvation of the souls of believers.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

On the Sacrament of Anointing the

Sick

Q.- What is anointing the sick?

A.- It is a Holy Sacrament by which the sick receive healing of the soul and rest of body.

Q.- How is the Sacrament of Anointing administered?

A.- The Sacrament of Anointing consists of the touching of the sick person with holy oil by a priest, who repeats over him the appropriate prayer.

Q.- What are the beneficial effects of this Sacrament?

A.- It effects forgiveness of earthly sins, and confers on the sick person patience, courage, strength, and it may be the healing of his natural sickness.

Q.- What preparations are necessary for Anointing?

A.- The sick person must prepare for it by repentance and confession of sins.

Q.- When should the Sacrament of Anointing be received?

A.- It should be received before the sickness overcomes the afflicted person; however, it may also be effective after this if the sick person has previously asked for it and prepared for it.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

On the Sacrament of Marriage

Q.- What is the Sacrament of Marriage?

A.- Marriage is the lawful union of a man and a woman to beget pure offspring, and for mutual help in life.

Q.- What are the conditions of marriage?

A.- Amongst these conditions it is required that marriage be by the consent of the two parties; that it be celebrated in the presence of a priest, who shall pronounce the blessings, and of witnesses. It shall not be between persons forbidden to marry by reason of their relationship, nor before the lawful age.

Q.- May the ties of marriage be loosed?

A.- They may be loosed only by the decease of one of the parties.

Q.- How must one prepare oneself to receive the blessing of this Sacrament?

A.- One must prepare oneself by confession and receiving Communion.

Q.- What are the duties of the man?

A.- The duties of the man are to love his wife and to live in harmony with her in the sight of God Most

High; to provide for his family and to bring up his children well as regards both their bodily and their spiritual welfare.

Q.- What are the duties of the wife?

A.- The duties of the wife are to love her husband, respect and obey him, living in harmony with him in the sight of God; and to help him in ordering the household and in bringing up their children well.

Q.- And what are the duties of the children?

A.- The duties of the children are to love their parents, obey and honor them, serving them in their old age, that they may receive their blessing.

SECTION THREE

ON THE ACTS
WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO PERFORM

CHAPTER ONE

On the Commandments of God

Q.- What are God's commandments?

A.- These are the Ten Commandments, which God delivered to the people of Israel by the Prophet Moses. Four of them are concerned with God, and the remaining six are concerned with our neighbour. The Lord Christ summed them up in two commandments: to love God and to love one's neighbour.

Q. - Say the Commandments.

A. - (1) I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods besides me.

(2) Thou shalt not take unto thyself any likeness or graven image, and thou shalt not worship

or bow down to them.

- (3) Thou shalt not swear by the name of the Lord in vain.
- (4) Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
- (5) Honour thy father and thy mother.
- (6) Thou shalt not kill.
- (7) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- (8) Thou shalt not steal.
- (9) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
- (10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his wife, nor his servant, nor anything that is his.

Q.- What did God promise those who keep his commandments?

A.- He promised them blessings and good things in this life and in the life to come, glory.

Q.- And how did He warn those who transgress them?

A.- He warned them that they would have trouble and pestilence, and after that eternal punishment.

CHAPTER TWO

On the First and Second Commandments

Q.- What does God command us in the First and Second Commandments?

A.- God commands us in these two commandments that we come to know Him, believe in Him, love Him, serve Him and worship Him alone, most highly respecting His divine majesty; and not to make any likeness or graven image to worship them.

Q.- What is forbidden in these two commandments?

A.- The denial of the Oneness of God, unbelief in God Most High, pagan worship, magic, and simony.

Q.- What is pagan worship?

A.- It is ascribing to creatures the honor which should be ascribed to the Creator alone.

Q.- What is magic?

A.- Magic is the work of the devil, in which harmful things are made use of, and unlawful means are resorted to; or it may be seeking information through things unknown. There are various kinds of magic.

Q.- What is simony?

A.- Simony is anything like selling the Holy Sacraments for money or other reward.

Q.-What do you say about honouring the Saints and their likenesses?

A.-The honour we pay to the Saints is limited; it is not worship. We respect them because they are the beloved of God and His pure ones. We pay respect to their likenesses in a godly fashion, for they are a blessed and beneficial reminder of their lives, just as we respect the temples of God and all sanctified objects which aid us in worshipping God.

CHAPTER THREE

On the Third Commandment

Q.- Against what does God warn us in the Third Commandment?

A.- God warns us in the Third Commandment against swearing by His holy name in vain. Rather we must respect it most highly, and we should bless Him with both lips and heart.

Q.- What is swearing?

A.- Swearing is calling on God to witness to the truth of that which we wish to affirm or promise, whether it be true or false.

Q.- Is it right to swear to the truth? If so, when?

A.- Yes. we may swear to the truth when it is necessary in important matters, and after the sentence of an ecclesiastical or civil judge.

Q.- What is appended to this Commandment?

A.- There is appended the injunction not to use the precious name of God as an oath, or in jest and disrespect; and not to swear by sacred objects consecrated to God; we must eschew blasphemy, cursing, swearing by one's right arm, and making empty vows.

Q.- What is blasphemy?

A.- It is showing vain contempt for God Most High and the Christian religion. Amongst its several forms

we find stubborn opposition to plain truth.

Q.- What is cursing?

A.- Cursing is the calling down of evil on ourselves or our neighbour. It is strictly forbidden.

Q.- What is a vow?

A.- A vow is a firm intention in God's sight to do something which is acceptable to Him; and we must carry out this intention to the letter.

Q.- How many conditions are there to a vow, and what are they?

A.- There are five conditions: namely, attentiveness, voluntariness, capability, the bringing about of a greater good, and the directing of the vow to God.

CHAPTER FOUR

On The Fourth Commandment

Q.- What does God command us in the Fourth Commandment?

A.- God commands us to keep the Sabbath, and to hallow it by refraining from all work and by glorifying God in prayer, attendance at Mass, reading sacred books or hearing them read, and by practicing good deeds.

Q.- Why was Sunday set aside in the New Testament in place of Saturday?

A.- Sunday was specially set aside, for it was the day on which Christ rose from the dead for the salvation of the world, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles.

Q.- What is attached to Sunday?

A.- The Sacred Feasts we must observe, these being the days specially set aside by God and the Church for worship and honoring of the saints.

Q.- Is it wrong to make one's neighbor work on the Lord's Day?

A.- Yes, it is wrong even if his work is unpaid.

CHAPTER FIVE

On the Fifth Commandment

Q.- What does God command us in the Fifth Commandment?

A.- He commands us to honor, respect, and love our parents, and to obey them in every possible way, serving them in their needs and necessities, especially in their old age.

Q.- What is the reward of those who keep this commandment, and what is the punishment of those who transgress it?

A.- God promised those who keep this commandment blessing and a long and peaceful life; and threatened with damnation and death those who transgress it.

Q.- What are the duties of parents to their children?

A.- The duties of parents are to provide their children with the necessities of life, to bring them up well' and to teach them the principles of religion, uprightness and manners.

Q.- Are we required to obey parents if their commands are contrary to the law of God?

A.- No.

Q.- What is appended to this commandment?

A.- Obedience and respect for our spiritual and civil superiors, while they in turn are required to govern us in justice and truth.

CHAPTER SIX

On the Sixth Commandment

Q.- What does God forbid us in the Sixth Commandment?

A.- God forbids us to destroy ourselves or our neighbour in any manner whatsoever, in thought, word, or deed, and bids us eschew everything that may harm our neighbor physically, morally, or in the life to come.

Q.- What is attached to the sin of killing?

A.- Passionate hatred, love of revenge, anger, cursing and doing injury, that is, the things which lead to killing, the setting of an evil example and corrupt counsels, which war against the soul .

Q.- What is incumbent on him who harms his neighbour?

A.- He must make up for the harm done to the best of his ability, either by word or deed.

Q.- Who also sins against this commandment?

A.- Anyone who by his command or advice causes death, or does not do what he can for the protection of his neighbour.

CHAPTER SEVEN

On the Seventh Commandment

Q.- What does God forbid us in the Seventh Commandment?

A.- God forbids us in the Seventh Commandment to commit adultery, which is uncontrolled animal passion inducing men towards what is contrary to self-control and order in thought, word and deed.

Q.- What is appended to this Commandment?

A.- Lewdness, debauchery, and marrying with blood relatives.

Q.- How may we avoid this sin?

A.- We may avoid it by shunning all inducements to it that is, evil companionships, immoral dancing places, lewd literature, drunkenness, overeating and idleness. Rather we should steadfastly practice confession, take Communion, fast, read sacred literature, and think on the possibility that we may be called from this earth by death at any time.

Q.- What should we do if we fall into this sin?

A.- Whoever falls into this sin must immediately cleanse himself with the pure water of repentance; for to continue in it blinds the eyes and blunts the

conscience.

CHAPTER EIGHT

On the Eighth Commandment

Q.- What does God forbid us in the Eighth Commandment?

A.- He forbids us to steal, that is to rob our neighbour of his money in any manner whatever or by any means whatever.

Q.- What are the kinds of sin which stealing leads to?

A.- Among them are these: trickery in buying and selling, deceit, oppression, plundering, usury, bribery, which is taking part of another's money as payment for some illegal aid to him, so that an evil man may triumph; also keeping stolen money, and lack of intention to repay a debt; and gambling.

Q.- In repenting of this sin must we restore stolen money?

A.- Yes, restoration of stolen money to the person we have robbed is absolutely necessary if one would seek forgiveness of this sin, if to restore it is within our power. We must also make up for any harm done.

CHAPTER NINE

On the Ninth Commandment

Q.- What does God forbid us in the Ninth Commandment?

A.- God forbids us to bear false witness, which is calling on God on high to witness a lying statement.

Q.- What are the forms of this sin?

A.- Among these are lying, slander, a vain criticism and evil thoughts about another.

Q.- What is lying?

A.-Lying is consciously speaking things that are at variance with what one knows to be the truth, with intention to deceive and ensnare.

Q.- What is calumny or evil speaking?

A.- Calumny is accusing another person of a sin which he did not commit, or attributing to him a vice he does not have.

Q.- What is slander?

A.- Slander is speaking of the faults of one's neighbour in his absence without any real cause to do so.

Q.- What is a vain criticism?

A.- A vain criticism shows itself when one passes judgment in one's heart on another with respect

to some undesirable deed without sufficient evidence.

Q.- What is evil thinking?

A.- Evil thinking is to entertain wrong thoughts about a brother violating his good name contrary to the truth.

Q.- What must one do who has injured his neighbour by any of these wrongs?

A.- One must, in the presence of those one has wronged, admit one's error.

Q.- How may we avoid these sins?

A.- We may avoid these sins by making truthfulness a firm habit in all our actions and words.

CHAPTER TEN

On the Tenth Commandment

Q.- What does God forbid us in the Tenth Commandment?

A.- He forbids us in the Tenth Commandment all unlawful passion and desire, that is, coveting the property of our neighbour, his wife or his servant or anything else of his.

Q. Is lust forbidden as sin?

A.- Yes, for lust results from harbouring thoughts of sin. It is forbidden.

Q.- How shall we avoid these sins?

A. - By clinging to personal purity and Christian self-control, and by crushing every concept which is at variance with these two virtues.

Q.- How are we required to keep the Commandments of God?

A.- We are required to keep the Commandments of God by doing them in full sincerity, for it is possible to observe them if we employ a firm, strong will to do so, and spiritual zeal, calling on God's grace to help us.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

On the Commandments of the Church

Q.- Recite the Commandments of the Church.

A.- (1) Keep Sundays and Feast Days.

(2) Attend Eucharist on Sundays and Feast Days.

(3) Observe Lent and the other Fasts.

(4) confess your sins, even though it be only once a year.

(5) Receive Holy Eucharist, at least once during Passover.

(6) Pay tithes.

(7) Refrain from marrying at forbidden seasons.

Q.- How do we hallow Sundays and Feast Days?

A.- On Sundays and Feast Days we must attend Divine Eucharist from beginning to end, in reverence, humility and faith, and pay close attention. On Feasts in remembrance of Christ we should think on the blessings of Salvation Christ brought us. On Feasts of the Virgin and of the Saints we should think on their virtues, so as to be guided by their example, and ask their intercession for us.

Q.- What is Fasting?

A.- Fasting is the abstention from food and drink,

avoiding certain unseemly foods, to confine oneself to certain simple articles of diet for the sake of abstemiousness and temperance.

Q.- What are the obligatory Fasts?

A.- They are the great Lent, Advent Season, the prescribed days before the feast of our Lady, the Apostles, the fast of Nineveh, the Wednesday and Friday Fast, throughout the year, with the exception of fifty days from Resurrection to Whitsunday.

Q.- What must we say of one who fails to observe the Fasts?

A.- Whoever fails to keep the Fasts out of disrespect and carelessness sins grievously. However, exemption from the Fasts may be had by order of the heads of the Church.

Q.- What is Tithing?

A.- Tithing is the giving of alms, votive offerings and gifts, a duty which is required of us by the Church for her needs and that of the clergy. We must give cheerfully. To these add charity, one of the most important religious duties, by which we relieve the necessity of our poorer brethren.

CHAPTER TWELVE

On Sin

Q.- What is sin?

A.- Sin is every thought, word and deed contrary to the command of God and His holy law.

Q.- How many kinds of sins are there?

A.- Sin is of two kinds: Original sin and present sin.

Q.- What is original sin?

A.- This is the sin which embraces all mankind as an inheritance from the disobedience of our father, Adam.

Q.- What is present sin?

A.- This is sin intentionally committed by thought, word or deed.

Q. -What are the divisions of present sin?

A.- Present sin is divided into two kinds: great and small or deadly sins and accidental sins.

Q. -What is a deadly sin?

A.- This is an iniquity a man commits knowingly, of a grave nature, with full intent and understanding. This sin is punishable by eternal death.

Q.- What is accidental sin?

A.- This is a slip in some minor matter without knowledge or full intent on our part. It does harm to our spiritual lives.

Q.- What are innate sins?

A.- These are grievous sins, which give rise to many evils. They are: pride, miserliness, anger, adultery, greed, envy and sloth.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

On Virtue

Q.- What is virtue?

A.- Virtue is a worthy adornment in character which sweetens the soul.

Q.- How many divisions of virtue are there?

A.- There are two: godly virtues, that is, concerning our conduct towards God; and moral virtues, which concern ourselves and the perfecting of our conduct in society.

Q.- How many godly virtues are there, and what are they?

A.- There are three godly virtues-faith, hope and love.

Q.- What is faith?

A.- Faith is a divine gift of grace surpassing natural law, which God bountifully bestows. By it we believe in Him and in the truths He sets forth for us in His Holy book and through the Church.

Q.- Who sins against faith?

A.- He sins against faith who doubts God and His church, fails to declare his faith or falls away from it, or is careless about the principles of religion.

Q.- What is hope?

A.- Hope is a divine grace granted us by God in His goodness, by which we place firm hope and trust

in Him, and rely on Him with confidence, trusting Him for eternal happiness.

Q.- Who sins against hope?

A.- He sins against hope who relies on anything less than God Himself, or does not continue to trust in His salvation, or is purposely slow to repent.

Q.- What is love?

A.- Love is a virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake and we love our neighbour as ourselves for his own sake. Love is the greatest virtue.

Q.- How do we show our love to our neighbour?

A. -We show our love to our neighbour by deeds of kindness; both spiritual and material.,

Q.- How many deeds of spiritual kindness are there , and what are they?

A.- They are seven: namely, instructing the ignorant, giving good counsel to Inquirers, comforting those in mourning, bringing the wayward back to the right path, admonition of sinners, forgiveness to those who have wronged us, and prayer for the living and the dead.

Q.- How many deeds of material kindness are there, and what are they?

A.- They are seven: namely, feeding the hungry, giving

drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, visiting the sick, giving shelter to strangers, and burying the dead.

Q .-Mention the moral virtues.

A.- The moral virtues are many, the most important being: humility, self-control, prudence, abstemiousness, obedience, justice, forbearance, patience, temperance, honesty, generosity, zeal, strength, courage, and firmness. It is such as these which adorn the noble soul of the Christian.

CONCLUSION

On the Essence of Christian Doctrine

Q.- What is the essence of Christian doctrine?

A.- The essence of Christian doctrine is that we should believe in God and work out our salvation in deeds.

Q.- What is the essence of faith?

A.- The essence of Faith is that we should believe that God is, and believe especially in the mysteries of the Unity of God, the Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption, and in Holy Church, her authority and her sacraments; in the resurrection of the dead, rewards and punishments after death, and in all that God commanded in His Holy Bible.

Q.- What is the essence of the works of salvation?

A.- The essence of the works of salvation is that we should keep all the Commandments and injunctions of God and of His church, eschew sin, and practise virtue and godliness.

Q.- What is the outcome of this?

A.- The outcome of this is the enjoyment of eternal happiness with God Most High which is man's chief aim and his highest joy.

(This completes the book. God be praised.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Moran Aphrem I Barsoum, the Patriarch (A. D. 1887-1957)

Aphrem was born on 15 June 1887 at Mosul, Iraq. He is the son of Esthaphan and Susan and his baptismal name was Job. Job received his early education in a private Dominican school, studying French and Turkish as well as religious literature and history. He learned Arabic under Muslim scholars. In 1905, Job was a student at the Zafaran Monastery, Mardin, Turkey. Job was ordained Subdeacon (*Youfadyakno*) on 31 *Tulam* 1905 by Mor Dionysius Behanam. He was ordained full-deacon on 31 *Meenam* 1907 by the Patriarch Abded Aloho II and was called Aphrem. Deacon Aphrem was ordained Ramban on 1 *Medom* 1907 and was ordained Priest on 8 *Meenom* 1908.

In 1911, the responsibility of the printing press of Zafaran Monastery was entrusted to Father Aphrem. In 1916, he attended the synod as the representative of the Bishop of Jerusalem to elect the successor of Patriarch Abd Allah II (d. 1915). On 20 May 1928, Father Aphrem was ordained Bishop by name Severios for the diocese of Syria by the Patriarch Elias III.

Mor Severios Aphrem visited the world famous libraries of Oxford and Cambridge and prepared valuable books on Syriac literature, theology and history. He participated in the World Conferences held at Geneva and Lausanne on Faith and Order (August 3-21) in 1927 as the apostolic delegate. Thereafter he was sent to the United States where he established three new churches and ordained Priests. He also gave lectures on the Syriac language and literature at Providence University and the University of Chicago. The University of Chicago honoured Mor Severios Aphrem by giving him membership in the Asiatic Society.

Patriarch Elias III passed away on 13 February 1932 while visiting India. Mor Aphrem Barsoum was elected to be the Patriarch of Antioch on 16 January 1933. The new Patriarch was enthroned on 30 January 1933 assuming the ecclesiastical name Mor Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum. Immediately after that His Holiness completed the construction of the Patriarchal headquarters at Homs, Syria and constructed churches at Beirut, Aleppo and Zahle. A theological seminary was established at Zahle, Lebanon, which was later moved to Mosul and then to Beirut.

Among the Patriarchs, Moran Aphrem Barsoum is comparable to Mor Michael Rabo, the Great (1166-1199). Moran Aphrem Barsoum was proficient in Syriac, Arabic, Latin, French and German. He has prepared *The Church history* since the time of Bar Hebraeus (1286-1940). *The history of Zafaran monastery*, *The history of Syrian dioceses* (1687-

1768), *The history of the Church* during the first four centuries, *The biographies of Syrian fathers*, *The history of Thurabdin*, *The scattered pearls*, *Arabic-Syriac encyclopaedia* are a few among his writings. There are several books, which still remain as manuscripts. The Syrian Christians should earnestly take up the translation/publication of these works.

Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem I Barsoum served the church with determination. His Holiness was called to eternal rest on 23 June 1957. On June 27 the mortal remains were interred at the northern side of the altar of the Soonoro church, Homs, Syria.