

From the Book of Marganitha (The Pearl)
On the Truth of Christianity
Written by Mar Odisho, Metropolitan of N'siwin and
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PART I
ON GOD

CHAPTER I

Theory Concerning God

That there is a God, and that the world is created, is made, and is temporal.

St. Paul the heavenly apostle, the treasury of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual philosopher, has, through the Spirit, laid an awe-inspiring foundation for Theology, by his saying, that men “should seek God, and feel after Him, and find Him out from His creation.¹” The artificer is known by his art, and the maker through the thing made.

That the world is made, and created, and that it had a beginning in time is evident from the fact, that it is compounded, framed and regulated as a whole, and in all its parts. Everything that is compounded, framed and regulated must have a compounder, framer and regulator. That it is compounded is proved from *its* whole being made up of many parts, and from all its bodies being made up of matter and species, and from the visible and invisible movers therein. But the most certain witness, of its being framed is man, who is a small world in himself, and in whose formation all creation is brought together, as one of the sages has

¹ Acts 17:27.

said: "Man is an epitome of the whole world, and of the whole frame of creation." That the world is regulated is clear from the wonderful order of the heavens, the planets, the elements, with all their productive powers, generating plants, trees, mines, and the members of beasts and of men, the astonishing order of which surpasses the wisdom and knowledge of all created beings. In the same way the ancient philosophers concluded that every motion must have a mover, until it arrived at Him Who is not moved, Who is the Cause of all, and of Whom they predicated that He must be good, wise, and almighty. God, inasmuch as He created the world without a cause (i.e., of His own motion); wise, because of the admirable order and frame displayed in the universe; almighty, because He overcame the things which are naturally destructive of each other, and brought them together in one agreement. Further, this world is made up of quality and quantity, as respects its bodies and spirits, and of different dimensions and extensions, of which the mind can inquire, why they were not less or more, higher or lower than they are. And when it would know a cause for the appropriate designs, resemblances and dimensions, of all and of each, and for their existence and continuance as they are, it can find no other than the will and intelligence of the Creator, who created and disposed them after His own will, and as He knew
w o u l d b e b e s t a n d m o s t f i t .

The artificer must of necessity exist before the work, in order that it may be proved of him that he is really the maker of that which did not exist before, and that he made it. This truth, then, being confirmed, it follows that the world is made, and had a beginning in time, and is not eternal. It also follows that it has a Maker, Who is good, wise, eternal, strong, and possessed of a will.

CHAPTER II

That God is One and Not Many

That the Maker of this world is one and not many is proved by the fact that it is impossible that many can possess one, perfect, unchangeable, self consentaneous will; because they must either be co-equal in essence, and in everything appertaining thereto, which would destroy plurality by the non-existence of distinction, or anything distinguishing, just as **it** is inconsistent to conceive of the existence of two blacknesses, alike in every respect, and not distinguishable, and having but one and the same substance or they must be distinct from each other in essence and in all that appertains thereto; for they would be contrary and destructive of one another. But con-substantiality could not exist between two opposing makers, nor could a perfect work proceed from them. For they must be alike in essence, and distinct in what appertains thereto, each one having an appropriate quality by which he is distinguishable from his associates: when they would all be compounded of the things in which they are alike, and of those in which they are distinguishable. But every compound thing is made, and must have a maker and compounder; hence results the truth of that declaration: "The Lord our God

is One God"², and "...though there be gods many and lords many, to us there is but one God."³

² Deuteronomy 6: 4.

³ I Corinthians 8: 5-6.

CHAPTER III

That God is Eternal

Everything that exists must be either eternal or temporal; and everything temporal has a cause and a maker, and time and maker must be preexistent to it. But that the cause of all things is without a cause, and that the Creator of all things has no maker, every right and unprejudiced mind is assured of, because it is natural to it so to judge. It follows, then, that the Self-existent is the Creator, and the Eternal, anterior to time, because He Himself created time. Time is a reckoning of the motions of bodies, and as we have already proved that He is the cause of these, therefore He is eternal, and without beginning. Now that which has no beginning, can have no end, and must possess of these two opposite extremes whatsoever is the most high and the most glorious, as truth, light, and life, and must be the Best, the Wisest, the Almighty.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

That God is Incomprehensible

Every thing comprehensible is comprehended either by the senses, or by the mind; and that which is comprehended by the senses must be either a body or an accident. But the adorable God is not a body; for every body is compound, and every body occupies space, and every body has limits, all of which is opposed to the Self-existent. Nor is He an accident; for an accident cannot exist alone, but requires a substance wherein to exist.

All that is comprehended by the mind, the mind must either stretch to the ends of its length and breadth (which are parts of its limits distinguishing it from what it is not) in order that it may in reality comprehend it; but hereby the thing is at once limited, and limit and dimension are foreign to the nature of the Self-existent; or the mind does not stretch to its end, nor is it able to limit its boundaries, for these are incomprehensible. Hence the Divine Nature is incomprehensible, it being impossible for the mind to comprehend anything of the knowledge of the Self-existent, except that He does exist.

It is said of a certain great philosopher, that he always used this prayer: "O you cause of the motion of my soul, grant me to know that minute essence which moves me, what it is, and what it is like. But not even that minute essence with which I am endowed, and by which I am capable of knowing, can comprehend what you are, and how you are; but only that you do exist."

Now, when we say (of God) that he is invisible, uncompounded, impassible, and immutable, we do not describe what He is, but what He is not.

CHAPTER V

On the Trinity

Everything that exists must be either a material body whose existence is the subject of accidents and changes, and is acted upon by whatever is opposed to it; or not a body, and consequently not the subject of any of these things. Now, we have already proved, that God (glory be to His incomprehensibility) is not a body and therefore is not subject to anything pertaining to materiality, from which He is infinitely removed. Whatever is immaterial, and not subject to anything appertaining to matter, the traditions of the ancients call Mind. And whatever is exclusive of matter, and of what appertains thereto, must be knowing, and must know himself, because himself is ever present and known to him, and it is not dependent on anything but itself. And whatever knows its essence must be living. Therefore God is Wise and Living. Now, he who is wise discerns because of his wisdom; and he who is living is living because he has life. This is the mystery of the Trinity, which the Church confesses of that Adorable Nature, Mind, Wisdom and Life. Three co-essential properties in One, and One who is glorified in three

properties. The Mind (the Church) has called Father and Begetter, because He is the Cause of all, and First. The Son (She) has called Wisdom and Begotten, because He is begotten of the Mind, and by Him everything was made and created. The Life (She) has called, the Holy Spirit and Proceeding, because there is no other Holy Spirit but He. He who is Holy is unchangeable, according to the interpretation of received expositors; and this is that which is declared by John the Divine, the son of Zebedee: "In the beginning was the Word,"⁴ and "the Life is the light of men."⁵ Now in the manner of the soul which is possessed of three-fold energy; mind, word, and life, and is one and not three; even so should we conceive of the THREE IN ONE, ONE IN THREE. The sun also, which is one in its disk, radiance, and heat, is another simile adduced by the second Theologus Paul, the chosen vessel⁶: "He is the brightness of His glory, and the Express Image of His being;"⁷ and, again: "Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."⁸ Further, everything that exists is either an accident or a substance. But the Self-existent can in no wise be susceptible of accident. Therefore these three properties are consubstantial and are on this account called (Qnume) hypostasis or substance and not accidental

⁴ John 1:1.

⁵ John 1:4.

⁶ Acts 9:15.

⁷ Hebrews 1:3.

⁸ I Corinthians 1:24.

powers, nor do they cause change in the nature of the consubstantial nor plurality; for He is the Mind, the Same He is the Wisdom, the Same He is the Life, Who ever begat without cessation, and puts forth (makes to proceed) without removal from Himself. These things (cessation removal) are infinitely removed from Him for there is no real likeness between created natures and the Nature of the eternally existing and a simile does not in everything resemble that which is compared by it; for then the simile and that which is compared by it would be the thing itself, and we (who have just instituted several comparisons) would not be unlike the man who attempts to compare a thing by the self-same thing. The mystery of the Trinity is expressed in the words of the Old Testament: "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness;" the occurrence of the letter noon three times in this sentence is an indication of the Trinity⁹. The "Holy thrice repeated in the seraphic hymn, as mentioned by Isaiah, joined with one "Lord" attests Three Qnume in One nature. The words of David, also, are of 'the same import: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth;" and many other like references. Let the heathen, then, and Jews who rail at the truth of the Catholic Church, on account of her faith in the Trinity, be confounded and put to shame. Here endeth the first part.

⁹ Ne'bed Nasha Bsalman Akh D'Mutan (Genesis 1:26).

PART II
ON THE CREATION

CHAPTER I

On the Creation of the Universe

He to Whom time was before He wrought, and subsequently began to work, must have wrought either by compulsion, or through necessity, or from a motive of, goodness. But God did not create the world of compulsion, because there was no other God except Him, nor any other Essence to compel Him to act. Neither of necessity, because His Essence is perfect, and in nothing wanting, and He is the Giver of all perfection, and is Himself imperfect in nothing, either in His Essence, or in what appertains thereto. It justly results, then, that He created the world of His goodness and love, He being by nature the origin of all good and bounteous things.

First He created the Angels, the heavens, and the four elements, the light, and the planets. After that trees and plants; then the different classes of animals, with their various species. And when He had adorned the universe with every good thing, and made it like the chamber of a bridegroom, and a wonderful paradise, on the sixth day, after the heavens and the earth with

all their hosts were finished¹⁰, He created the first Adam, the father of the human race, “in the Image of God created He him” according to the testimony of the blessed Moses, the first among the Prophets, and the first of the scribes¹¹. And he was called an image (of God) for three reasons: First, on account of the reasonable soul with which he was endowed, and which is a likeness of the Divine Image in a twofold respect, first, in its spirituality, minuteness and incorporeality; and, again, because (soul) in its mind, word, and life, symbolizes the TRINITY. Secondly, on account of power over all and the sovereignty and free will.¹²

Thirdly, because therefrom God intended to take a temple for His union (thereto), and to be worshipped of all with Him for ever and ever.¹³

¹⁰ Genesis 2:1.

² Genesis 1:27.

³ Genesis 1:26.

⁴ Hebrews 2:16-17; John 2:21.

CHAPTER II

On First Man's Sin

After God had thus created Adam a reasonable image, a wonderful temple, and a bond of the universe, in short, a small world existing in the great world, He took from him a rib and made therewith woman, and placed them in the delectable paradise of Eden which He had prepared for them, and commanded them that they might eat of all the trees in paradise, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they were not to eat. And He further decreed, that in the day they should eat thereof they should die the death¹⁴. Now, hereby God declared the freedom of man's will; for, had they not been free to act, He would have wronged them in punishing their transgression of the command; whereas, if they acted of their own free will He justly condemned them, inasmuch as with propensity towards evil and in their own pride of spirit, they trampled upon and despised the Divine command, in order that they might become gods¹⁵, and be released from submission to their Creator, after the advice of the devil who deceived them. Because of this, they became

⁵ Genesis 2:7-17.

⁶ Genesis 3:5.

debtors to death, and fell under subjection to the devil, and were shorn of their glory¹⁶, and put on shame, and were removed from the companionship of angels, and were cast into a land of curses¹⁷. Their children also, because they walked in the selfsame way of transgression, bound more tightly to the yoke of the devil, and of death, on their necks and these forgot their Creator, and walked after their own hearts, lust, and the desires of their own minds, and nourished iniquity, and strengthened rebellion, "who, being past feeling, gave themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness. On this account justice woke up, and led Noah and those that adhered to him into the ark, which the Long-suffering had ordered to be made in the hope of their repentance. And every mortal was destroyed by the flood, and the earth was cleansed from their wickedness¹⁸. And thus after two thousand years, more or less, that barbarous dispensation was brought to an end.

⁷ Genesis 3:7-11.

⁸ Genesis 3:17-19.

⁹ Genesis 7:25.

CHAPTER III

On the Divine Laws and Ordinances, and On the Prophets

When Noah went forth from the ark, God gave him ordinances adapted to the infancy of human nature; but, gradually, as his race increased, they forgot these, and some of them deemed it right to worship the images of their illustrious men, namely, those whom they loved and they justified their worship, whilst others joined in a ruinous confederacy, and made a vain counsel that they would build a tower and a place wherein to rebel against God; so that in case of another flood being sent in His anger, it might serve them as a place of refuge; or in case of His commanding anything contrary to their will, they might thereby ascend and war against heaven. And for this reason God confounded their tongues, and scattered them to the four winds of heaven¹⁹, but they further by the worship confirmed error of images, and sacrificed their sons and their daughters to devils and they feared and served the creature rather than their Creator. God then chose our father Abraham, from whose seed He purposed to take to Himself an everlasting temple, gave him the covenant of circumcision, and entered into a compact

¹⁰ Genesis 11:1-9.

with him²⁰, and in him began the way of the fear of God called Hebrew. After this, through successive generations, God raised up of his family good and righteous persons, who labored in vain to make men return unto the Lord. Then Moses, the head of the Prophets, was chosen, and to him were given written laws and ordinances²¹, such as were not vouchsafed to the three dispensations which preceded him. And in him began the Jewish dispensation, which like a child who has not yet attained to perfect knowledge, he meditated the old law, which enjoined that good should be done towards those that do good and relations, and evil to evil doers and enemies²². It moreover represented God after the similitude of man, with bodily members, as dwelling at Jerusalem, as abiding on Mount Zion and among the congregation of Israel²³. It makes no mention of hell, or of the kingdom of heaven; but it threatens the transgressors of its laws with corporal punishments, such as submission to enemies²⁴, they being scattered among the gentiles²⁵, with drought²⁶, famine, poverty and barrenness²⁷; whilst, on the other hand, the good are rewarded with

¹¹ Genesis 17:10.

²¹ Exodus 20:1-17.

²² Deuteronomy 23:7-6.

²³ Psalms 41:10-11.

²⁴ I Kings 8:27; II Chronicle 2:6, 6:18; Acts 17:24; Deuteronomy 28:25.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 4:27.

²⁶ Deuteronomy 28:23-24.

²⁷ Deuteronomy 28:38.

earthly and temporal rewards. All the Prophets who succeeded Moses followed and confirmed this way, and for it they submitted to every species of trial and persecution.

CHAPTER IV

Prophecies Concerning Christ

All the holy Prophets prophesied of CHRIST, Who was to bring salvation to the world²⁸, to make new all created things. And, in order not to lengthen our discourse, we shall adduce the witness of six of the greatest among them. In the first place Israel, the father of the Prophets, declared Jacob “The scepter” that is a king, “shall not depart from Judah²⁹, nor a lawgiver” that is, a prophet “from between his feet, until He shall come Whose it is, and Him shall the nations wait for” together with the remaining portion of the chapter. Moses says: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a great prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken ³⁰and any soul which will not hearken to that Prophet that soul shall be lost off from among its people.³¹” The deliverance of Israel, moreover, out of the hand of Pharaoh, was a type of the redemption of all from under the power of the chief of this world. The manna³², also, prefigured the mystery of our Lord’s Body; the water from the

²⁸ Ephesians 1:7-10.

²⁹ Genesis 49:10-12.

³⁰ Deuteronomy 18:15.

³¹ Deuteronomy 18:19; Acts 3:23.

³² Exodus 16:4; John 6: 31-34, 49-50.

rock³³, the drinking of His Blood; and the brazen serpent³⁴, His life-giving Cross.

David likewise fully prophesied of CHRIST in the Psalm, "Why do the Gentiles rage?³⁵" and in that beginning with "O Lord our God, how glorious is Thy Name in all the earth!" and in that, "My heart overflows with good news" as also in the Psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand."³⁶

Isaiah prophesies: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is Our God with us, and again that His name shall be called Wonderful and Counselor, the Almighty God, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting FATHER, Angel of great Intelligence."³⁷"He would be given for our sins, and will be humiliated for our iniquities: and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him;³⁸" to the end of the chapter. Zechariah says: "Fear not, O daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, humble, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."³⁹

³³ Exodus 17:6; I Corinthians 10:4.

³⁴ Psalm 2:9, 10-45.

³⁵ Numbers 21:8-9.

³⁶ Psalm 110:1.

³⁷ Isaiah 7:14.

³⁸ Isaiah 53:5-end.

³⁹ Zechariah 9:9

Daniel, after having fixed seventy Sha'wu'een (i.e. Weeks), which were to precede His manifestation said: Messiah shall be killed, and it (the city) shall be deprived thereof; and the holy city shall be destroyed (together with the king that is to come) and He shall cause the sacrifice and gift offering to cease⁴⁰. Then I beheld thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit⁴¹; and I saw one like the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven, and He came to the Ancient of Days; and to Him He gave judgment and authority over all peoples, nations and languages and that Him they may serve. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed⁴². Here ends the Second part.

⁴⁰ Daniel 9:26-27.

⁴¹ Daniel 7:9.

⁴² Daniel 7:13-14.

PART III

ON THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION

CHAPTER I

On the Advent of Christ and His Union

Justice is an universal benefit, since whatsoever man would have others do to him, justice demands that he should do to them; and whatsoever he would not have men do to him, let him not do them either. This is the Law and the Prophets⁴³, as saith the Savior. But as the prophets could not hereby reduce to perfect order the lives of men, and bring them to a perfect knowledge of the truth by causing them to forego idols and follow the divine commands, in order that they might be saved, there remained no other way for the renewal of our nature, and for the reformation of our lives but that GOD should appear in the world. Like a sovereign, who having sent many messengers to dispense the affairs of his kingdom, and to put in order those whom he would reconcile, if these should be overcome because of their weakness, and be unable to effect anything, he goes in person to put those of that country in order. For since GOD is invisible in His nature⁴⁴, and because were it possible for Him to appear to the created as He is, all Creation would be destroyed by the brilliancy of His brightness; therefore, He took to

⁴³Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31.

⁴⁴ Job 23: 2-9; John 1:18, 5:37; I Timothy 1:17, 6:16.

Himself a man for His Habitation⁴⁵, and made him His temple, and the place of His abiding, and thus united an offspring of mortal nature to His Godhead, in an everlasting, indissoluble union⁴⁶, and made it a co-partaker of His sovereignty, authority, and dominion.⁴⁷ That is, the Divine Essence enlightened the human nature by its union therewith, as the pure and faultless pearl is enlightened by the rays of the sun falling upon it causing the nature of that which is enlightened to be like the nature of that which enlightened it, and causing the sight to be affected by the rays and brightness pertaining to the nature of that which received, as it is by the nature of that which communicated the light, no change whatever taking place in the agent by his action on that which was acted upon. And, again, just as speech hidden in the soul is united to written discourse by the consent of the mind, and is transmitted from one place to another without itself moving, from its place, so the Word of the Father united with the man of us, through the agency of the mind, and came into this our world, without departing from the Father in his Essence.⁴⁸ “The word became flesh and dwelt among us.⁴⁹ A devout and pious man laboured for many years in prayer to God, that He would disclose to him the meaning of this declaration: A voice from heaven was

⁴⁵ John 1:14; John 2:21-22; Acts 17:31; Philippians 2:6-10; Acts 2:22.

⁴⁶ Hebrews 13:8.

⁴⁷ Philippians 2:9-12.

⁴⁸ John 10: 30-38; 12:45; 14: 7-10; 11:7; 1:14; Hebrews 5:7; 10:5.

⁴⁹ John 1:14; Galatians 3:13.

at length vouchsafed to him, saying: "Ascribe to the flesh the word "became" and to the Word ascribe "dwelt" and the meaning was thus preserved.

CHAPTER II

On the Dispensation of Christ

With the salutation of angel to the Blessed Virgin: "The Lord be with thee; blessed art thou among women,⁵⁰" GOD the Word, beyond all doubt, united Himself at that moment with that which He formed simultaneously, and without human seed⁵¹, in the womb of the Holy Virgin, and to which He gave the name of the "Highest,⁵²" and He wrought miracles at His birth⁵³ and diffused joy over the whole world⁵⁴, and endued Him with boundless wisdom, grace and stature⁵⁵. And when He had attained the age of about thirty years⁵⁶, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar⁵⁷, and the three hundred and forty-first of Alexander He presented Himself to the baptism of John⁵⁸. Not that His purity needed a baptism of water⁵⁹; but in order that He might become a pattern and example to us in

⁵⁰ Luke 1:28.

⁵¹ Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:34-35.

⁵² Luke 1:32.

⁵³ Matthew 2:1-2.

⁵⁴ Luke 2:10-11, 14, 31-32.

⁵⁵ Luke 2:40-52.

⁵⁶ Luke 3:32.

⁵⁷ Luke 3:1-9.

⁵⁸ Matthew 3:13.

⁵⁹ Matthew 3:14-15.

every thing⁶⁰. He was baptized, and He commanded that we should be baptized⁶¹. He fasted, and directed us to fast⁶². He prayed and taught us to pray. He humbled Himself, and instructed us to be humble⁶³. He was modest in the exercise of every virtue, and enjoined us to be modest. But anyone who observes and teaches them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven⁶⁴. And after he worked miracles and mighty wonders in the land of Judah, such as, the healing of the sick, the raising of the dead, the opening of the blind eyes, the making the lame to walk, casting out devils, and revealing hidden mysteries, He drew near to the time when He was to pay the debt of the first Adam's transgression, and to cancel the decree of condemnation against his race, and to reveal by fact the mystery of the general resurrection⁶⁵. He suffered, and was crucified in the day of Pontius Pilate⁶⁶. He died⁶⁷, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, as it is written⁶⁸. After

⁶⁰ Peter 1:15-16

⁶¹ Matthew 3:13-end; John 3:5.

⁶² Matthew 4:2, 6:16-18, 9:15; Luke 5:35, Matthew 11:1-14, 17:21, 6:5-13.

⁶³ Matthew 12:19-20, 5:39 end, 11:29-30; John 13:14-15, Philippians 2:5-8.

⁶⁴ Matthew 5:19-20.

⁶⁵ Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:13-19, 15:1; Corinthians 15:3-8, 12-20.

⁶⁶ 1 Timothy 6:13, 15:15.

⁶⁷ Acts 1:3; Matthew 28:18-end.

⁶⁸ Luke 24:50-51.

His resurrection⁶⁹, He appeared to His disciples through many miracles during the space of forty days, saying to them: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Just as My FATHER has sent Me, I am also sending you. Go, therefore, convert and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY SPIRIT and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you; and I am with you always to the end of the world, Amen."And He took them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them; and as He blessed them, He parted from them and ascended up to heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD. Then the disciples went forth and preached in every place and the LORD helped them, and confirmed their words by the miracles that they performed. This is the beginning of Christianity; its truth we shall establish in the following chapter.

⁶⁹ Mark 16:19-20.

CHAPTER III

On the Truth of Christianity

Christianity is the belief in One Divine Nature, in three hypostasis,⁷⁰ and the confession of CHRIST as has already been explained⁷¹, and the belief in a resurrection of the dead⁷², and a judgment to come⁷³, and in a new and eternal life⁷⁴, all which articles of faith are spiritual and unworldly. For the rational soul has a threefold power, lust, anger, and discriminating judgment, from the excess or the want of a due proportion of which, evil acts and follies proceed, and from the harmony of which proceed virtues. Our Gospel, moreover, discourses with regard to each of these in their relation to nature. Thus, with regard to lust: "Whoever looks at a woman to with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."⁷⁵ Again: "Be ye like the birds of heaven⁷⁶, and like the wild flowers." And, again: "Do not be anxious about tomorrow."⁷⁷ Of anger, "Love your enemies⁷⁸, bless them

⁷⁰ Matthew 28:3.

⁷¹ John 17:3.

⁷² Matthew 22:29-32; Luke 14:14; John 5:28-29; Hebrews 6:2.

⁷³ Hebrews 6:2; Acts 17:31; Romans 2:16.

⁷⁴ John 6:68, 17:3.

⁷⁵ Matthew 5:28.

⁷⁶ Matthew 6:28-29.

⁷⁷ Matthew 6:34.

that curse you, and do good to them that hate you." Of discriminating judgment: that the kingdom of GOD is within you and it is evident that the kingdom of God is life Everlasting and life everlasting is knowledge of the truth. ⁷⁹"These are life everlasting, that they might know thee, that thou art the only true God, and Him that thou sent Jesus Christ.⁸⁰" What doctrine is more exalted than this! Or what truth can be more accurate than this, or superior?

The truth of Christianity is indicated by this also, that like philosophy, it is divided into theory and practice. The end of its theory is truth, as we have already shown, and shall yet further show; and the end of its practice is virtue, *as we proved* by what we said of the powers of the soul, in regard of which it demands purity of thought, and the sanctification of the spirit, and enjoins good to be done to evil-doers, the love of our enemies, and that we should bless those who curse us. The truth of the Christian faith is still further established by the credibility of those who preached it," who preached and wrote of CHRIST. Men, who without exercising any compulsions, and without holding out any lure, were received by people of various tongues, by kings, sages, and philosophers; for whoever abandons the religion of his forefathers, and follows him who calls him to embrace another, must do

⁷⁸ Matthew 5:44.

⁷⁹ Luke 17:21.

⁸⁰ John 17:3.

so either from fear, or because of the allurements held out to him; or he is led by the supernatural signs and wonders by which it is attested. But the blessed Apostles had neither weapons nor power to terrify any; neither had they possessions or riches wherewith to allure; it results, then, that the world bowed to listen to them on account of the supernatural signs and wonders which they wrought. But GOD does not work miracles by the hands of false men, so that they may not cause His servants to err, and corrupt the work of His hands. The Apostles, therefore, were true and not false men; and if they were true, those things which we confess of CHRIST, and which we have received from their preaching and writings, hence Christianity professes in verified truths, because those who delivered them were true.

CHAPTER IV

On the Different Sects

When the light of the manifestation of Christ shone forth it scattered the darkness of error from the face of the world by the intermediary of these true preachers; idols became naught, pictures and molten images passed away, and the earth was cleansed from the abomination of sacrifices and unclean rites, and the inhabitants of the world learned goodness, holiness, humility, and gentleness, and the earth was full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. This filled Satan with envy and rage, and he forthwith proceeded to act towards us as he had acted towards Adam; so that after the beatified Apostles, and their disciples and their immediate successors, had slept he provoked Christians rose up against each other, and divisions and controversies sprung up among them, and heresies without number increased in the Church of CHRIST, until they went so far as to compass each other's destruction, and regarded each other as blasphemers deserving of death. How many false doctrines were rife, and how many impieties and abuses were perpetrated in those days, we learn from the histories of Mar Eusebius. On account of these things, the Ecumenical Council of the 318 was convened, by order of the good and CHRIST-loving

and holy Emperor Constantine, .in the year of Alexander 636, and by the power of the SPIRIT, and by proofs adduced from the Holy Scriptures, they decreed, interpreted, enlightened, disclosed, manifested, and confirmed, the orthodox faith; and by strong argument and with words of sound doctrine, they condemned all the heresiarchs, excommunicated and cut them off from the body of CHRIST, as being diseased members not susceptible of cure. And thus the Catholic Church was purified from every stain of vain worship and false doctrine, and all the world, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, was of one mind and of one Church. About one hundred years after this a dispute arose between Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria, and Mar Nestorius Patriarch of Byzantium, on the subject of incarnation. In the confession of the Trinity all Christians agree, for all accept the Nicene Creed, which creed confesses that the Trinity is co-equal in essence, Lordship, power and will; and all confess of CHRIST that He is perfect GOD and perfect Man, being fully persuaded thereof by the declarations of the Gospels, of Saint Paul, and of the 318 Fathers. The dispute which now arose respected the manner of the Union, and the words used to express it. Cyril maintained that we ought to call the Virgin "Mother of God," and wrote twelve treatise excommunicating all who should, in any way, draw a distinction between the divinity and the humanity of CHRIST after the union. Nestorius replied to these Sentences, and showed that they were erroneous, and with respect to

the appellation "MOTHER OF GOD," he argued that it did not exist either in the writings of the Prophets or the Apostles. The Prophets prophesied of CHRIST to come⁸¹, and the Apostles preached of that same CHRIST⁸², predicted by the Prophets as coming into the world, that this was He Who was born of Mary and they showed that He is both God and man. Now, were we to use the expression "Mother of Man" only, we should be like Paul of Samosata, and Phontinus of Galatia, who said of our Lord that He was but a mere man like one of the prophets and on this account they were excommunicated; so if we use the bare expression "Mother of God" we become like Simon and Menander, who say that God did not take a body from Mary; but that His dispensation (life and actions) were hallucinatory and not real, and on that account they also were excommunicated. But we call the Virgin "Mother of CHRIST" the name used by Prophets and Apostles, and which denotes the union generally. Cyril, in the treatise which he drew up, and in which he excommunicated all who shall distinguish between the divinity and humanity of CHRIST, virtually excommunicated the Holy Scriptures, since the Apostles and Prophets do distinguish between the natures of the Person respecting Whom the dispute is, and from these the holy Fathers learnt to confess of CHRIST, that He is perfect GOD and perfect Man, the

⁸¹ Daniel 9:25.

⁸² Mark 16:16.

Likeness of GOD and the likeness of a servant⁸³, the Son of David and the Son of the Highest⁸⁴, flesh and Word⁸⁵.

From this time commenced the division of the Church; some followed Nestorius, whilst others went astray after Cyril, both parties mutually anathematizing each other; thereby causing divisions, slaughter, exile, imprisonment, and persecution of the Fathers, more than ever before, as is fully recorded in the histories of Irenaeus, Bishop of Tyre. After this, tumult and discord went on increasing until the zealous and CHRIST-loving Marcian undertook to convene the great Council of the six hundred and thirty two in the town of Chalcedon, and commanded that both parties should be examined and judged, and that whosoever did not follow the truth and faith as declared by Ecumenical Councils should be expelled from the Church, in order that the Church might be in one accord in all matters of faith. This Council confirmed the confession, that there are two natures in CHRIST each distinct in its attributes, and also two wills, and anathematized all who should speak of mixture, which destroys the two natures. But because in Greek there is no distinction between Qnuma (hypostasis) and person, they confessed but one Qnuma in CHRIST. And when the party of Cyril was not satisfied with the expression “two Natures” and the party of Nestorius with the

⁸³ Philippians 2:6-7.

⁸⁴ Luke 1:32-35.

⁸⁵ John 1:14.

expression "one Qnuma" an imperial edict was issued declaring all who did not consent to this doctrine degraded from their orders. Some were made to submit through compulsion; but the remainder maintained their own opinions.

Christianity thus became divided into three confessions; the first confessing One Nature and One Qnuma in CHRIST, which is held by the Copts, Egyptians, and Abyssinians, after the tradition of Cyril their Patriarch; and this is called the Jacobite sect, from a certain Suryaya doctor called Jacob who laboured zealously to spread the doctrines of Cyril among the Suryaye and the Armenians.

The Second sect are those who confess the doctrine of two Natures and one Qnuma in CHRIST, and these are called "Malkaya" (Royalists) because it was imposed forcibly by the king. This is the doctrine which is received by the Romans called Franks, and by the Constantinopolitans who are Greeks and by all the northern peoples such as the Russians, Alani, Circassians, Assai, Georgians and their neighbours. But the Franks differ from the rest of these in maintaining that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and in their use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist. These two sects also accepted the appellation "Mother of God" but the Jacobites have added to the canon; "Holy God, etc., "who was crucified for us."

The Third confession which professes in Christ two Natures, two Qnume, one will one Sonship, one authority; is called Nestorian. As to the Easterners, however, because they would not change their true faith, but kept it as they received it from the Apostles, they were unjustly styled "Nestorian" since Nestorius was not their Patriarch, neither did they understand his language; but when they heard that he taught the doctrine of the two Natures and two Qnume, one will, one Son of God, one CHRIST, and that he confessed the orthodox faith, they bore witness to him, because they themselves held the same faith. Nestorius, then, followed them, and not they him, and that more especially in the matter of the appellation "Mother of CHRIST." Therefore when called upon to excommunicate him, they refused, maintaining that their excommunication of Nestorius would be equivalent to their excommunication of the Sacred Scriptures and the holy Apostles, from which they received what they professed, and for which we are censured together with Nestorius, as shall appear in the following chapters.

Note: Qnuma in Greek is called hypostasis, namely, that which underlies the essence, by which the nature is known. And Parsoopa: the Greeks call prosopon: We Easterns, therefore, profess that M'shikha (Messiah) Our Lord is in two Natures in one person. But the question of the Godhead and humanity is brought into discussion in order so as to distinguish the natural properties of each Nature, then of necessity we are led to the discussion of Qnuma (the essence or underlying substance) by which the Nature is distinguished. These facts, therefore, lead us to the indisputable

evidence of the existence of two Qnume which are the underlying properties of these (two) Natures, in one person of the Son of God.

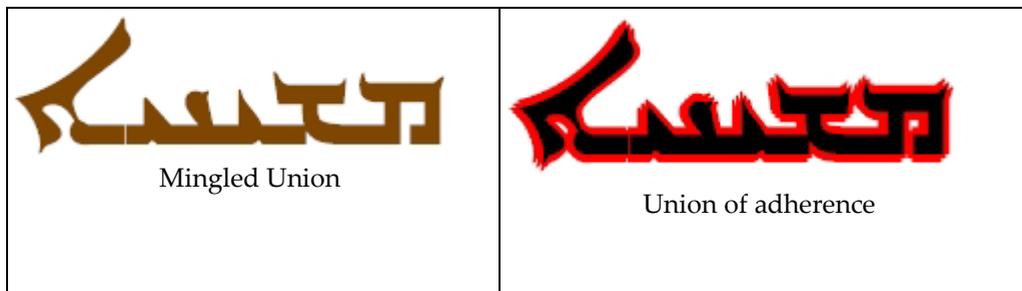
** For a detailed definition of the "Qnuma" see the Chapter "On The Distinction Of Nature From Qnuma, Etc.," by Rabban Yokhanan Bar-Zubi.*

CHAPTER V

Refutation of the Foregoing Creeds

After having carefully distinguished the above creeds, we shall now briefly refute two of them.

FIRST: If it is right to believe that there is but one Nature and one Qnuma in CHRIST after the union, either the human nature and Qnuma are destroyed through the union, here is destruction, not salvation. Or, the Divine Nature and Qnuma are destroyed –a monstrous profanity. Or, that they were mingled and confounded together –behold hence a corruption! Neither divinity nor humanity any longer existing. Mar Yokhanan Bar Pinkhaye adduced the name of CHRIST, written with black and red ink, by way of illustrating this confused union which the Jacobites believe, and the union of adherence which we believe; thus, CHRIST, behold corruption! Behold confusion! Is it red ink? It is not. Is it black ink? It is not. Now look at this CHRIST behold beauty! Behold light! Is it black ink? It is. Is it red ink? It is.



SECONDLY: The Divine Nature and Qnuma, before and after the union, is an eternal,

uncompounded Spirit. But the human nature and Qnuma is a temporal and compound body. Now, if the union nullifies the attributes, which distinguish the Natures and Qnume in CHRIST, either the one or the other of these becomes a nonentity, or they become a thing, which is neither GOD nor man. But if the union does not destroy the attributes, which distinguish the Natures and Qnume in CHRIST; then CHRIST must exist in two Natures and. two Qnume, which united in the person of the Sonship.

THIRDLY: the Gospel declares⁸⁶, that the child Jesus “grew in his stature, and in his wisdom, and in favour with GOD and man.” And the Apostle Peter⁸⁷, the head of the Apostles, says: “JESUS, a Man of GOD, appeared among you by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which GOD did by Him among you.” And, again, St. Paul, the master-builder of the Church, testifies that “there is one Mediator between GOD and man, the Man CHRIST JESUS.” These three quotations most clearly affirm of CHRIST, after the union, that He existed in two Natures and two Qnume, and whosoever shall dispute these testimonies is lost from all truth.

⁸⁶ Luke 2:52.

⁸⁷ Acts 2:22.

CHAPTER VI

On the Title “Begetter of God”

FIRST: If the Virgin is the “Begetter of GOD,” and the name “GOD⁸⁸, we know denotes FATHER, SON and Holy Spirit” then she brought forth the TRINITY, and not the one only SON.

⁸⁸ Genesis 1:1; John 1:1; Hebrews 1:10; Acts 17:24; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11; Hebrews 3:7-11; Acts 5:3-4.

SECONDLY: If the Virgin is the “Begetter of GOD” and He whom she brought forth suffered, died, and was buried, as the four Evangelists testify, either you hold that He died in reality; (and he who really dies has no power whatever to revivify others or himself, but must remain in death for ever;) and thus you declare false the saying that He rose again: Or else you hold that He died by Hallucination, and in the same way rose again, (in which case He could not have arisen in reality, seeing that He did not die in reality); then the hope of the resurrection is vain, since hereby the saying that “He has raised us up with CHRIST” is made void⁸⁹.

THIRDLY: If Mary is the “Begetter of God” and Peter testifies of Him whom she brought forth, saying: “Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD⁹⁰:” then according to your statement she is not the Begetter of CHRIST, but the Begetter of His FATHER, and CHRIST is her grandson, not her son, and she is the Mother of His FATHER, Who then is the mother of CHRIST?

⁸⁹ Ephesians 2:4-6.

⁹⁰ Matthew 16:16.

CHAPTER VII

On Four Qnume (Hypostasis)

FIRST: If by our confession of Two Qnume in CHRIST there result four hypostasis in the Trinity; then, by your confession of two Natures in CHRIST there must equally result two Natures in the Deity.

SECONDLY: If the TRINITY, as is admitted by all, is eternal and uncompounded, and the human

Qnuma is temporal and compound, how can this, in any way, be considered as a fourth Qnuma to That?

THIRDLY: If we maintained two Sons in CHRIST, this charge might justly be brought against us; because the FATHER and the SPIRIT, with these two Sons, would make four persons. But seeing that we confess but one SON, one CHRIST, one Person, we have no fear of being guilty of blasphemy.

CHAPTER VIII

On the Church

The term "Church" implies a congregation, and an assembly met together to unite in acts of festive celebration. It is symbolic of things above; for as the nine orders which minister to the Most High are divided in to three degrees, just so the Church. The Patriarchs, Metropolitans, and Bishops occupy the place of the Cherubim, Seraphim, and Thrones; the

Archdeacons, periodeute⁹¹, and Priests, the place of the Dominions, Authorities, and Powers; the Deacons, Subdeacons, and Readers, the place of the Principalities Archangles, and Angels. The name "Church" as we have said, has this signification; for CHRIST does not call material foundations and stones a "Church" but the total congregation of those who believe in Him⁹². The nave and the sanctuary are called the Church metaphorically, and at times the name city is applicable to those who live in it, as when it is said: "all the city went out to meet JESUS." And at times in its buildings as when it is said: "He entered into the city" And in these foregone chapters is summed up the third treatise.

⁹¹ Periodeute, a visiting priest acting Bishop's representative in visiting parishes and monasteries.

⁹² Acts 2:47; 5:11; 8:1-3; 9:31.

PART IV
ON THE CHURCH SACRAMENTS

CHAPTER I

On the Number of the Church Sacraments

The Sacraments of the Church, according to the Divine Scriptures, are seven in number: 1. The Priesthood, which is the ministry of all the other Sacraments. 2. Holy Baptism. 3. The Oil of Unction. 4. The Oblation of the Body and Blood of CHRIST. 5. Absolution. 6. The Holy Leaven, namely, the king.⁹³ 7. The sign of the life giving Cross. These are necessary because of the wants of man in this carnal world. In order for a man to be, and to exist in the world, he must be born of a carnal mother through a

⁹³ The Holy Leaven is referred to as “Malka” the King.

carnal father, though the figure and perfection of man come from the FATHER of Lights. In a like manner, in order to belong to a world of immortality, it is requisite to be born of the spiritual womb of baptism, through the agency of the spiritual father which is the priest, notwithstanding that form and perfection are imparted by the Holy spirit and by the power of the Most High. Further, it is requisite for every one belonging to this world to sustain his temporal life by temporal food, and earthly drink. So, in like manner, spiritual nourishment and divine drink are a means to him who is baptized for sustaining his eternal life in God.

Again, as everyone who is in the body, through the changes of the times, and bad conditions, is subject to sickness and disease, and is in need of physicians who will restore him to his former health if he follows their injunctions; so the man of God, through the effects of sin, and immoral living, falls into the disorders of iniquity, and receives health from the priests of the Church, the spiritual physicians, if he orders himself after their directions.

The Oil of Unction is used in the birth which is by baptism, and the Holy Leaven is used in the spiritual food of the Body of CHRIST. The sign of the life-giving Cross is that by which Christian are ever kept⁹⁴, and by it all the other Sacraments are sealed and perfected. But some Christians who possess not the

⁹⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:18.

Leaven reckon Marriage, which is according to CHRIST'S ordinance, (whereby in the place of a mortal deceased another is raised up), the seventh Sacrament. Should any from without inquire what constitutes the holiness and sacramental nature of each of these Seven Sacraments, we reply that these three things sanctify them; First, a true priest, who has attained the priesthood rightly, according to the requirements of the Church. Secondly, the word and command of the Lord of Sacraments⁹⁵, whereby He ordained each of them. Thirdly, right intention and confirmed faith on the part of those who partake of them, believing that the effect of the Sacraments takes place by a heavenly power. We shall now treat briefly of each of the Sacraments separately.

⁹⁵ 1 Corinthians 10:15-17.

CHAPTER II

On the Priesthood

The Priesthood is the ministry of mediation between GOD and man in those things which impart forgiveness of sins⁹⁶, convey blessings, and put away wrath⁹⁷. It is divided into imperfect, as was that of the law; and perfect, as is that of the Church.

The foundation of the Priesthood in the Church is laid on that declaration of the LORD of the Priesthood to St. Peter, in the region of Caesarea Philippi: "To thee I shall give the keys of the kingdom

⁹⁶ Numbers 16:17-26, v. 9.27.3. Jude 11.

⁹⁷ Numbers 16:46-end; Acts 5:1-16.

of heaven⁹⁸; whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven". Its superstructure comes from that other injunction: "Feed My lambs.⁹⁹ Feed My sheep. Feed My ewes Its completion and perfection from that He breathed on them saying:¹⁰⁰ "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; if ye forgive a man his sins, they are forgiven to him; and you withhold forgiveness of a man's sins, they shall be held".

The old Priesthood was one of generation¹⁰¹, and not one that was based upon manner of life and will, but the new Priesthood by Apostolic succession, and imparted in the Church through the laying on of hands¹⁰², is given to those who are deemed worthy of it after examination of their manner of life and thought. — "Let these be first examined¹⁰³, and then let them minister being found blameless." Therefore the perfection of this and the imperfection of that Priesthood is evident, since we know that very many wicked children are begotten to righteous fathers, as Cain, Kham, and the children of Lot, of Moses, Eli, and others; and good children are begotten of wicked fathers, as Melchizedek, Abraham, and others.

⁹⁸ Matthew 16-19 and 18:18; John 20:23.

⁹⁹ John 21:15-17.

¹⁰⁰ John 20:22-23.

¹⁰¹ Numbers 16:40.

¹⁰² 1 Timothy 4:14, 5:22; Titus 1:5-end; Hebrews 6:2; Acts 6:6.

¹⁰³ 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Acts 6:3.

Moreover, the former Priesthood was conferred by material oil¹⁰⁴; but this latter by the immaterial unction of the SPIRIT¹⁰⁵, through the laying on of hands. As to the matter of the rules whereby he who desires the Priesthood is to be tried, whether he be worthy or not, let him who wishes to know this attend to the words of St. Paul, the tongue of the SPIRIT; this is a true saying: "If a man desire the priesthood he desireth a good work. He who becomes a priest must be blameless, the husband of one wife, alert mentally, modest, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt at teaching; not given to wine, not hasty to strike, but patient, not quarrelsome, not greedy of lucre. One who rules well his own house, having his children under submission to bring them up with all purity. For if a man know not how to rule his own household, how can he take care of the Church of God? He should not be a recent convert, lest he become proud and fall into the condemnation of Satan. Moreover, he must have a good report from outsiders; lest he fall into reproach, and snares of Satan. Likewise the deacons must be pure, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, and they should not love impure profits; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these. "that is all the degrees of the Priesthood, be first proved, and only then should they minister, being found blameless."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Exodus 30:22-33, 29:7; Leviticus 8:12.

¹⁰⁵ Acts 2:4, 6:6, 8:15-18.

¹⁰⁶ 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

CHAPTER III

On Baptism

Baptism is the immersion in and the washing with water and this is divided into five kinds:¹⁰⁷ First, the washing off the filth of the body, as is commonly done by all men. Second, the washings according to usages of the law¹⁰⁸, whereby it was believed that purity towards God from all carnal uncleanness was attained. Thirdly, those of the traditions of the elders, such as “the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, beds”, and as “when they come from the market, except they bathe, they eat not¹⁰⁹.” Fourth, the baptism of

¹⁰⁷ Matthew 3:6-16; Mark 1:5; John 3:22-23 Compare Acts 16:13, 16:15; Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 6:12; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:22; Hebrews 10:22.

¹⁰⁸ Deuteronomy 23:11; Leviticus 15:5, 17:15-16 .

¹⁰⁹ Matthew 1:5. 2-3; Mark 7:3-8.

John¹¹⁰, whereby he preached only repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Fifth, the baptism of our Savior¹¹¹, which is received, through the Holy Spirit, for the gift of adoption of sons¹¹², for the resurrection from the dead¹¹³, and for everlasting life; which is “the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ¹¹⁴.” For as the circumcision of the flesh was given for a sign denoting those who were of the family of Israel of old according to the flesh; so the baptism of Christ is a sign of spiritual relationship to the new Israel, viz., those who are the called, and the children of God. “But those who received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God¹¹⁵.”

The matter of Baptism is pure water. If a man is not born of water and the Spirit¹¹⁶, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”. The form, of baptism is: “In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,”¹¹⁷ according to the words of our Savior. There is also a Sixth Baptism, that of blood, as our Lord has indicated: “I have a baptism to be baptized with¹¹⁸, and I am

¹¹⁰ Matthew 3:5-12; John 3:23; Acts 13:24; Acts 19:4.

¹¹¹ Matthew 3:11; John 3:5; John 1:33.

¹¹² 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 3:29; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1-5.

¹¹³ Romans 6:3-5:23; Col 2:12.

¹¹⁴ Colossians 2:11.

¹¹⁵ John 1:12.

¹¹⁶ John 3:5; Acts 8:36; Acts 10:47.

¹¹⁷ Matthew 28:29.

¹¹⁸ Luke 12:50.

oppressed until it is fulfilled". There is also a Seventh Baptism, that of tears, after the saying of the fathers. These two are allied to the fifth, which is an emblem of death and the resurrection.

CHAPTER IV

On the Oil of Unction

The Oil of Unction is an apostolic tradition¹¹⁹, originating from the oil consecrated by the Apostles themselves, and which by succession has been handed down in the Church of God to this day. The purpose of its use we learn from its own physical properties, and from the sacred Scriptures. The Divine book (Bible) instructs us that, according to the Law, such as were set apart for the symbolical priesthood¹²⁰, or for earthly sovereignty¹²¹, were anointed with the oil of unction. And in like manner with us: such as are set apart for the kingdom of heaven and for the true priesthood, must be anointed with this same manifoldly symbolical unction; in order that they may be truly anointed ones and brethren of Christ¹²², who by oneness and His union with God is truly and supernaturally anointed.

¹¹⁹ James 5:14; Mark 6:13.

¹²⁰ Exodus 30:23-30, 29:7; Leviticus 8:12.

¹²¹ I Samuel 10:1, 16:13; I Kings 1:39; II Kings 9:6; 11:12.

¹²² Hebrews 2:17.

“Therefore hath the Lord Thy God anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows¹²³.” He is the Anointer and the Anointed: the Anointer by His Godhead, and the Anointed by his humanity.

As to the natural properties of oil, we know that the most eminent artists, after having completed a picture with all its rich coloring, anoint it with oil, in order that it may not easily be injured, or receive damage when brought into contact with other objects. In like manner, those who are drawn after the likeness of the Heavenly King are for the same reason anointed, lest they should receive damage from the chances of the world and from the opposition of the devil.

The matter of the Oil of Unction is pure olive oil. The form the apostolic benediction.

¹²³ Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9.

CHAPTER V

On the Oblation

The oblation is a service offered up by those below to those above, through material elements, in hope of the forgiveness of sins and of an answer to prayer. The old oblations consisted of irrational animals and of the blood of bodies¹²⁴, but with us the Only-begotten of God¹²⁵, Who took upon Him the form of a servant¹²⁶, He offered His own body a sacrifice to His Father for the life of the world¹²⁷, and hence He is called by John, "The Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world¹²⁸." And again it is said of Him, that "His blood is the new testament, shed for many for the remission of sin¹²⁹." And again: "So God loved the world that He gave His Only-begotten Son¹³⁰," Who was offered up to His Father a living¹³¹, rational sacrifice for all the created, thereby reconciling the

¹²⁴ Leviticus 4:4ff.

¹²⁵ John 3:16.

¹²⁶ Philippians 2:6-7.

¹²⁷ Hebrews 9:14.

¹²⁸ John 1:29.

¹²⁹ Mark 14:24ff.

¹³⁰ John 3:16; Hebrews 12:24.

¹³¹ Hebrews 12:24.

world with His Greatness¹³², and bringing salvation to angels and to men. Now, seeing that it was impossible that His sacrifice upon the cross for the salvation of all could identically be enacted, in every place, throughout all ages, and to all men, just as it was, without any alteration, He beheld with an eye of mercy, and devised in compassion and with great wisdom; and in that night in which He was betrayed for the life of the world, He took bread into His holy, pure, and immaculate hands, blessed, broke, and gave it to His disciples and he said unto them, this is my body which is being broken for the sake of the life of the world unto remission of sins, likewise he blessed the cup and gave it to them saying "This is My Blood of the new testament, which will be shed for many for the remission of sins. Take therefore eat all of you of this bread, and drink of this cup, and do this, whenever ye shall meet together, in remembrance of Me." Through this divine command the bread is changed into His Holy Body¹³³, and the wine into His Precious Blood, and they impart, to all who receive them in faith and without doubting, the forgiveness of sins, purification, enlightenment, pardon, the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, the inheritance of heaven, and the new life, Whenever we approach these Sacraments we meet with CHRIST Himself and Him

¹³² Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:16; II Corinthians 5:19.

¹³³ The change which the author refers to, however, is not physical, but rather to the power inherent in this Holy Sacrament for the remission of sins of them that partake it in true faith.

we bear upon our hands and kiss and in partaking thereof, we are being united with Him, His Holy Body mixing with our bodies, and His innocent Blood mingling with our blood¹³⁴, and by faith we know Him that is in heaven and Him that is in the Church, to be but one Body.

The matter of this Sacrament CHRIST ordained to be of wheat and wine, as being most fit to represent body and blood. The form He conveys through His life-giving word, and by the descent of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER VI

¹³⁴ I Corinthians 10:15-17.

On the Holy Leaven

The holy and blessed Apostles, Thomas and Bartholomew of the Twelve, and Addai and Man of the Seventy, who discipled the East¹³⁵, committed to all the Churches in the East the Holy Leaven, to be kept for the perfecting of the administration of the Sacrament of our Lord's Body until His coming again. And should any Christians dispute the fact of the above mentioned Apostles having committed to those of the East this sanctified Leaven, on the ground that Peter, the head of the Apostles, and his companions did not commit it to the Western¹³⁶, and should object to us on this wise: "If what you say is true, then one of these two consequences must result: either the Apostles did not agree in their mode of discipling, which is unseemly to think, or this tradition of yours is false". Against these we reply: The Easterns from the day of their discipleship up to this day have kept their faith as a sacred trust, and have observed, without change, the Apostolic Canons; and notwithstanding all the persecutions which they have suffered from many kings, and their subjection to the severe yoke of a foreign power, they have never altered

¹³⁵ Mar Addai, according to the general opinion is supposed to be the same as "Taddai" one of the twelve, but according to some others, he together with "Mar Man" is said to be of the seventy.

¹³⁶ The term 'Western' here denotes Christianity within Roman Empire.

their creed nor changed their canons. Such as are well versed in such matters know full well the labor and care required on the part of Christians to observe these canons, and more especially to preserve this Leaven, in a difficult country, where there is no Christian sovereign to support them, nor any commander to back them, and where they are continually persecuted, vexed, and troubled. Had this Leaven not been of Apostolic transmission they would not, most assuredly, have endured all these afflictions and trials to keep it together with orthodox faith. Then, as to their argument drawn from Peter and the great Apostles who disciplined the West, we have this to oppose them, — that those Apostles did transmit the same to the Westerns but that with their alteration of the faith, the canons also were corrupted by their (Western) subjection to the will of heretical kings. And, in proof of this statement, we urge that if they all held the traditions of the Apostles, the Franks would not offer an unleavened, and the Romans (Greeks) a leavened oblation; since the Apostles did not transmit it in two different ways. Therefore, the Westerns have changed the faith and the canons, and not the Easterns.

CHAPTER VII

On the Remission of Sins and Repentance

The human race is apt to err and easily inclined to sin, and it is hardly possible that all should not be tried with spiritual diseases; and on this account the healing priesthood was given to heal freely. "If you forgive a man his sins, they shall be forgiven;¹³⁷ "Those that are well need no physician; but those who are seriously sick;"¹³⁸ And, again: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners unto repentance". Three parables I quote to this effect, that of the Prodigal Son¹³⁹, of the Hundred Sheep¹⁴⁰, and of the Two Debtors¹⁴¹, which were intended to increase the hope of sinners, and to open to them the gate of repentance, which leads to heaven and imparts heavenly happiness. And in demonstration thereof, the case of Peter after his denial of CHRIST, and of Paul after his persecution, and the woman who was a sinner, the Publican, and the Thief upon the cross. Hence it is incumbent upon believers when, through the infirmity of their human nature, which all cannot keep upright, they are overcome of sin, to seek the Christian Dispensary, and to open their diseases to the spiritual Physicians, that by absolution and penance they may obtain the cure of their souls, and afterwards go and partake of the Lord's Feast in purity, agreeably with the injunction of the eminent doctor, who writes thus: "Our Lord has committed the

¹³⁷ John 20:23.

¹³⁸ Matthew 9:12-13.

¹³⁹ Luke 15:11-32.

¹⁴⁰ Luke 15:3-7.

¹⁴¹ Luke 7:41.

medicine of repentance to learned physicians, the priests of the Church. Whomsoever, therefore, Satan has cast into the disease of sin, let him come and show his wounds to the disciples of the Wise Physician who will heal him with spiritual medicine¹⁴².”

These things will most assuredly result if they are done in faith¹⁴³, and not after a worldly manner, for “whatsoever is not of faith is sin” just as some, people, for lucre’s sake, have made of this sacred thing a merchandize, and a source of temporal profit.

¹⁴² This is a quotation from Mar Narsai, renowned doctor of the Church of the East who lived in fifth century and wrote extensively. It is also quoted in the service appointed in the *Khudra*, to be read on the first day of the commemoration of the Fast of Ninevities.

¹⁴³ Romans 14:23.

CHAPTER VIII

On Matrimony and On Virginity

Marriage after the ordinance of CHRIST, and entered into for the sake of the care and labor of a wife about the house, and for the bringing up of children in the fear of God, without indifference or grumbling, and in order that the eye may not wander towards that which belongs to others, the Scriptures call this a holy estate: "Marriage is honorable in all and their bed is pure¹⁴⁴." Paul makes it the mystery of things far above this world: "This is a great mystery¹⁴⁵, but I speak concerning Christ and His Church". Hence divorce is unlawful except for the cause of adultery, or that (reason) which pertains to the soul and which is divisible into three kinds: sorcery, denial of the faith¹⁴⁶, and murder. Or to that of the body: "Whosoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, causes her to commit adultery¹⁴⁷; and whosoever shall marry her that is separated commits adultery¹⁴⁸." With regard to Virginity, the steward of God's house saith: "I have no

¹⁴⁴ Hebrews 13:4.

¹⁴⁵ Ephesians 5:32.

¹⁴⁶ I Corinthians 7:10-18.

¹⁴⁷ Matthew 5:32.

¹⁴⁸ In Aramaic the words d'share and shwaqta as used by Christ denote different meaning. The former 'to divorce,' the latter 'separated, but not divorced.' Likewise, it applies to marrying the guilty party in a divorce.

commandment of the Lord¹⁴⁹.” For the commandment of the Lord enjoins matrimony. But should any one desire to keep his virginity, and to follow, in this respect, the example of the Baptist, of the SAVIOUR, of Elijah, and of Paul, it is allowable for him so to do, agreeably with the permission, and not after the command of God. Not, moreover, because he counts marriage an unholy and contemptible thing, but on account of what it entails, such as being obliged to mix with the multitude, to have and to hold converse with them, and to reside in towns and villages, from which all offences arise, which makes the yoke of marriage heavy and increases one’s cares, and thus hinders the soul’s spiritual advancement by its manifold connection with the world. Notwithstanding this, however, he who makes a vow of virginity, and does not become like a spiritual angel in theory and in practice, is inferior to a lax layman; for “every man who battles in the contest frees his mind from everything else”.

¹⁴⁹ I Corinthians 9:25.