

# ST. JOHN

**MONTHLY MAGAZINE**

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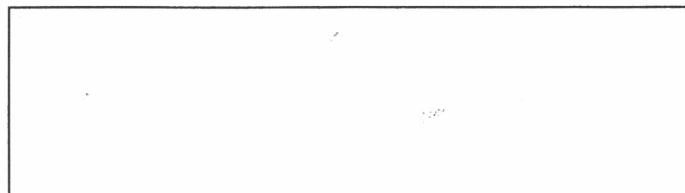
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# The Schedule of Meetings & Occasions

# For Deacons Only

## SUNDAYS

English Liturgy . . . . . 7:30 - 10:30 A.M.

Arabic Liturgy . . . . . 8:00 - 11:30 A.M.

## WEDNESDAYS

Liturgy . . . . . 10:00 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

## FRIDAYS

Liturgy . . . . . 3:00 - 5:30 P.M.

Agape Repast . . . . . 5:30 - 6:30 P.M.

### The Deacons Meeting

Spiritual talk for the deacons . . . . . 6:30 - 7:30 P.M.

Alhan for the deacons . . . . . 7:30 - 8:30 P.M.

### Friday Youth Meeting

Arabic Youth Meeting . . . . . 7:00 - 9:30 P.M.

## SATURDAYS

The Youth leaders and Sunday School Teachers,

Service Preparatory Meeting . . . 5:00 - 6:30 P.M.

Vespers & Bible Study . . . . . 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.

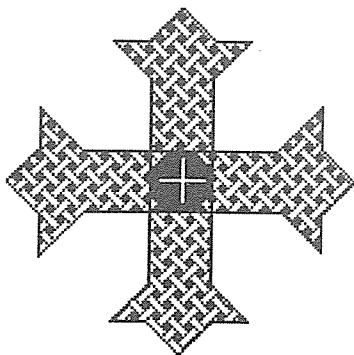
### Saturday Youth Meeting

The English Youth Meeting . . . 7:00 - 8:30 P.M.

- Followed by a period for confession

- The Midnight Praise

## FEASTS



### **THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS**

Vespers, Thursday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-8:30 P.M.

Festal Liturgy, Friday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 -10:00 A.M.

1. The Deacon is a servant of Christ and His Church and not a singer.

2. The Deacon is a leader in the church and must set a good example to the regular believers. He must be blameless.

3. All Deacons must attend the church early before starting the service and not after.

4. If we arranged the priorities, the spirituality of the Deacon and his good behavior are required and come first before his pleasant voice and lovely singing.

5. The harmony among the Deacons performance is essential, and some protocol rules have to be followed. The Younger respect the older and follows him.

6. The Deacon Must attend the Deacons' Meeting prior to the Sunday Liturgy, or else he will be deprived from service that Sunday. If he has an acceptable excuse which kept him from attending and the priest allowed him to serve, he may, but cannot lead the choir of Deacons.

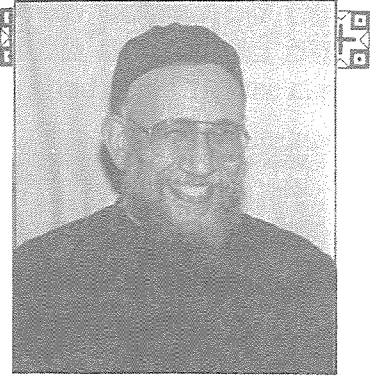
7. There is a schedule for the Deacon's service inside the sanctuary and out, the readings and the leadership. The Deacons who are assigned readings during the Liturgy, must prepare for them prior to the Liturgy, in order to understand what he is reading and avoid mistakes.



Message of the Church Fathers  
St. Athanasius the Great

# The Great Lent

Edited by Fr. Matthias F. Wahba



St. Athanasius speaks of fasting in his Paschal Letters, which are related to the feast of Pasch, i.e. Easter. According to the custom and tradition of his predecessors, the bishops of Alexandria and Patriarchs of the Coptic Church, he often sent such letters to the people each year near the time of the Feast of Epiphany, the Lord's Baptism, to announce to them the date of Easter, and consequently the beginning of the Lent. It is worth mentioning that the first Ecumenical Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) recognized the efficiency and knowledge of the Bishop of Alexandria, and his ability to accurately determine the date of Easter every year. It was therefore assigned to him by the council to carry out this responsibility on behalf of all the churches.

## The journey of the Lent

At the beginning of the Lent, we start the holy spiritual journey which ends with the joy of the Feast, at the top of which is the communion of the Holy Pascha (Passover), i.e. the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord.

In his 6th Paschal Letter written for the year 334 A.D., St. Athanasius likens the forty days which we fast with The Lord Jesus to the forty years which the children of Israel spent, after their departure from Egypt, in preparation for their entry into Jerusalem. He considers these forty years as a symbol of the Lent; so, if we keep the Fast as believers and celebrate the Feast spiritually, "we may be able to enter into the joy of Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven". Then he continues, "But as Israel, when going up to Jerusalem, was first purified in the wilderness, being trained to forget the customs of Egypt,... let us first be purified and freed from defilement, so that when we depart hence, having been careful of fasting, we may be able to ascend to the upper chamber with the Lord, to sup with Him; and may be partakers of the joy which is in heaven." It is remarkable here that the Saint considers Communion as ascending with the Lord to the upper room, where the disciples received communion from

the hand of the Lord Himself ( See Mark 14:15,16; Luke 22:12,13). Then he certifies the importance of fasting: "In no other manner is it possible to go up to Jerusalem and to eat the Passover, except by observing the fast of forty days."

## How to fast ?

The acceptable fasting is that which combines prayer with fasting. The Saint says, "Let us watch like David, who rose seven times, and in the middle of the night gave thanks for the righteous judgments of God. Let us be early as he said: In the morning Thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will stand before Thee, and Thou wilt look upon me (Ps. 5:3). Then he puts Daniel as an example for us saying, "Let us fast like Daniel." We might mention that Daniel, in his fasting, "did not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank," but his meals were only of beans. Daniel also practiced "prayers and supplications with fasting"(daniel 1:8, 12:9:3; 10:2,3). The Saint then returns to discuss the element of prayer and how it should be practiced during the fast, saying, " Let us pray without ceasing, as Paul commanded; all of us recognizing the season of prayer, but especially those who are honorably married." The Saint here might also be alluding to the advice of St. Paul to abstain temporarily from nuptial relations on the condition that "it be with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, so that Satan does not tempt you for your lack of self-control." (1 Corinth. 7:5). And lest anyone should think that this temporary abstention for the purpose of worship implies a degrading of the sanctified marital relations, St. Athanasius asserts that marriage is honored; and such abstention is of the level and value as our abstention from food and drink during the fast.

"May God accept our fasting and prayers, as well as all the aspects of our worship, through the prayers of our father St. Athanasius the Apostolic.



## The Divinity of Christ (2)

### Jesus Is Lord & God

By

Fr. Augustinos Hanna

*We talked in the last issue about two proofs of the Divinity of Christ : (1) The Prophecies & (2) His Divine Names. In this issue we will discuss His Characters or Attributes and His Divine Works.*

#### (3) The Divine Attributes of Christ:

That means, the Divine characters of God alone are the same of Christ, such as:

**1. Omnipresence:** No creature - neither human nor an angel - can be present everywhere all the time, but God alone the Creator. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Person who claimed to be Omnipresent. Here are some references. **He is Everlasting:**

- a) *"I AM the Alpha and the Omega"* (Rev. 1:11).
- b) Jesus said, *"Before Abraham was I AM"* (Jn.8:58)
- c) *"O Father, glorify Me with the glory which I had with You before the world was"* (John 17:5 also Jn.1:1, 17:24, Micah 5:2, Heb. 9:14 & 1 Pet 1:19 ).

**He is Present Everywhere:**

- a) *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"* (Matt.18:20).
- b) *"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven"* (John 3:13).
- c) *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20). In this verse Jesus says He will be

with all the believers who are scattered in the whole world, both everywhere and every time

#### 2. Jesus is Self-Existent: "I AM"

The mere name of Jesus, "I AM", which He used many times, is the same name of "Yahweh" or "Jehovah" that the Lord God declared to Moses in **Exodus 3:14** and it means that He is self-existent.

- + *"I am the bread of life"* (John 6:35 &48).
- + *"I am the light of the world"* (Jn. 8:12 &12:46).
- + *"I am the way, the truth and the life"* (Jn. 14:6).
- + *"I am the Alpha and the Omega"* (Rev. 1:11).
- + *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (Jn.11:25).
- + *"I am the good shepherd"* (Jn.10:11 &14).
- + *"I am the door..."* (Jn.10:7,9).
- + *"I AM the true vine..."* (Jn.15:1).
- + *"If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins"* (Jn.8:24).

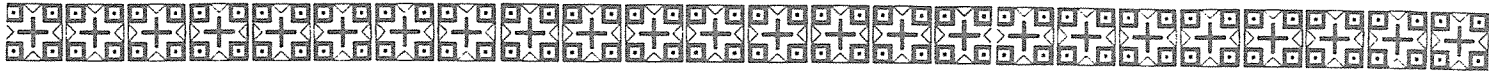
#### 3. Omnipotence: (Almighty)

Jesus claimed to have the power and authority over everything in heaven and on earth. He said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"* (Matthew 28:18).

This declaration means that He is either God Himself, or a big liar, blasphemer and insane person. It is not a matter of words, but He proved His great announcement by His power and miracles over heaven (angels, demons, judgment, answering prayers, forgiveness of sins etc.) and on earth (the nature, the sea, the wind, sickness, life and death, humans, beasts, plants). That is why He said: *"Believe Me for the sake of the works themselves"* (Jn.14:11 &15:22, 24).

#### 4. Omniscience: (He knows everything)

He could read people's thoughts (Mark 2:8 &Jn 21:17), know and tell the past secret life events of others, as He did with the Samaritan woman and



Nathanael (Jn.4 & 1:49-51). He knows the unknown and the future, predicted about the fish which swallowed the coins, and the destruction of the Jewish Temple which happened forty years later, and even the signs of the end of the world (Matthew 17:27 & 24). The Quoran admits that.

## **5. His Holiness and Infallibility:**

Jesus was called the "Holy One", by angels and even demons (Luke 1:35 & 4:34), in the mean time the Bible says that God alone is Holy "*Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!...For You alone are holy*" (Rev. 15:4).

Jesus defied His enemies, "*Which of you convicts Me of sin? (Jn.8:46). "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens"* (Heb.7:26).

## **6. His Absolute Perfection:**

The Lord Jesus Christ was perfect in everything, the complete Divine perfection. He was perfect in His Power, knowledge, holiness, love, mercy, wisdom and sacrifice. He did not inherit the original sin of Adam because of His virginal birth by the Holy Spirit. He did not commit sin (1 Peter 2:22), nor knew sin (2 Cor. 5:21), and no wonder because He is God incarnate.

## **7. His Immutability (Unchangeable):**

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).*

## **(4) The Divine Works of Christ:**

All the Divine works of God are the same as those of Christ.

### **1. The Power of Creation:**

It is well known that God alone is the creator and none but Him can create anything. But Jesus could

create new eyes to the born blind man from the clay (John 9). He also created thousands of loaves and fish out of five loaves and two fish (Matthew 14:13-21 & 15:32-36). Jesus' power of creation is one of the strongest proofs of His Divinity, and it is even written in the Quoran that Christ created living birds from the clay.

### **2. His Providence:**

Jesus was described in the book of Hebrews as, "*the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power*" (Heb.1:3). "*He calls His sheep (billions and billions) by name and leads them*" (Jn. 10:3). Jesus said, "*the very hairs of your head are all numbered*" (Matt. 10:30 & Luke 12:7). "*He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name*" (Ps. 147:4). Since He is the creator, therefore, He should be the "Pentocrator", who cares for all His creation.

### **3. His Salvation:**

Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world. His name "Jesus" means "Jehovah saves" or "God saves" (Matt. 1:21). "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12).

All human beings are sinners, and no sinner can save another sinner, nor any bankrupt debtor can pay off for another. The Lord still performs the miracle of salvation every day, and converts the sinners into saints.

### **4. The Power of Remission of sins:**

*"That you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins..."*(Mark 2:15,10). Moreover, Jesus gave His apostles the authority to forgive sins, "*He breathed on them and said "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of*

any, they are retained" (John 20:22, 23).

### 5. The Power of Resurrection:

Jesus said, "I AM the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25). He performed many miracles of raising the dead (Matt. 9:18-25 & Luke 7:11-15 & John 11).

He also said, "*For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will....Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice (the Son) and come forth those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation*" (John 5:21, 28, 29). "*Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*" (Jn.6:45). The Quoran of Moslems admitted that also.

### 6. The Act of Healing:

God said in the book of Exodus, "*I Am the Lord who heals you*" (Exo. 15:26). Jesus proved to be God by healing evert day all kinds of sicknesses and hopeless deceases by one word or touch from His blessed hands. The Quoran of Moslems admits that clearly.

### 7. The Authority of Judgment:

The Lord Jesus said, "*The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son*" (Jn. 5:22 see also Matt. 25:31- 46). The Quoran also admits that.

#### COMING TO TERMS

**CHRISTIAN:** one who believes in Jesus Christ and emulates His life.

**CHURCH:** the People of God and the body of Christ.

**ORTHODOX:** correct or right belief, doctrine, vision.



## "By Pride Comes Nothing"

By Mary Habib

"By pride comes only contention, but with the well-advised is wisdom" (Proverbs 13:10).

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**4**

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The above was a poster in a fast food restaurant. It shows eagerness to improve their products, to serve the public better. Eagerness to listen, to learn, to grow.

Let us ask ourselves, "Do we have that kind of attitude toward God and others? Are we eager to provide better service to people in Christ's name? To have our weaknesses and faults pointed out so that we may grow? Are we ready to take criticism, suggestions, and advice?"

An eagerness to listen to criticism and to learn is definitely a mark of true wisdom. The next time we feel quick to defend ourselves when criticized, regardless of who is giving the advice, welcome its intent.



# The Wild Duck

One day a wild duck flew into a barnyard. The farmer threw out grain for its food every day. The wild duck liked not having to hunt for food so she ate greedily. At last when fall came, other ducks flew overhead on their way south. The wild duck began to flap her wings wildly. But she had eaten so much and grown so plump that she could hardly make it to the barn roof. She dropped to the ground exhausted.

So, of necessity, she decided to make the best of it and stay around for the winter. Daily she ate the grain that was thrown to her and daily she became fatter and heavier. The next time the wild ducks flew over the barnyard quacking loudly, she again sought to respond to their call but, this time, all she could do was feebly flap her wings! Finally she did not as much as look up when a flight came over the barnyard. Then came the fatal day when the farmer plucked her out of the barnyard and put her into the oven to make of her fricassee\* and dumplings for his Sunday dinner.

God did not intend that we settle down in the barnyard of this world. As a Sunday school student said once:

**“This world is only a stopping place on our way to heaven.”**

God created us with the ability to respond to the call of the high, the noble and the true. He wants

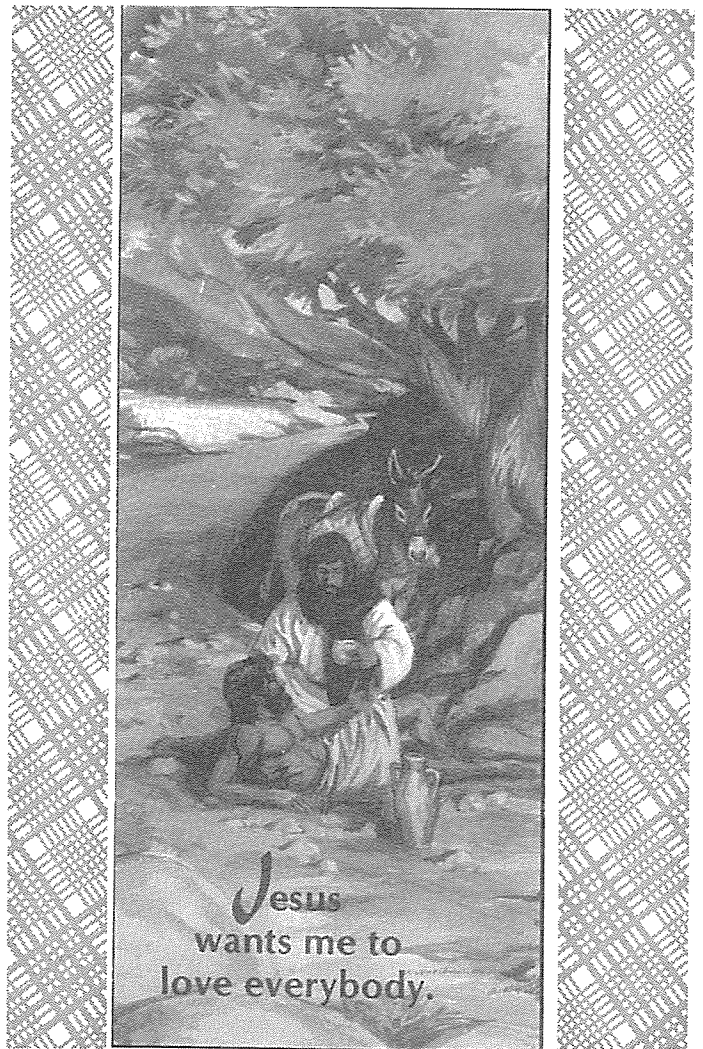
\* Fricassee = a dish made of cut-up pieces of veal or chicken.

us to enjoy this world which He made for us, but in the right way, but He does not want us to become so overly attached to the things of the things of this

world - so weighed down by them - that we neglect the eternal life He has prepared for us.

**God has given us wings with which we can ascend to heaven every day -- the wings of faith, hope, love and prayer. The wings of repentance, the wings of the Bible, the Holy Sacraments, and the Divine Liturgy.**

**We are to use these wings in preparation for that great day when the Lord will call each one of us to appear before His judgment seat.**



**Jesus  
wants me to  
love everybody.**



# Reincarnation (2)

By  
Fr. Augustinos Hanna

Is it true, that reincarnation is a Christian belief?

Abbot George Burke answers this question claiming, "Contrary to popular thought, it is very much a Christian belief! The Orthodox Jews have always held a belief in reincarnation, and Jesus and the Apostles, being extremely Orthodox, as any reading of the Gospels will reveal, also believed and taught reincarnation!" Then he quoted some verses from the Old Testament and the New which he believed to support his view.

Here are some of his verses, and my comments on them:

1) "*Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there*" Said Job (1:21).

This verse has nothing to do with reincarnation. Job himself interpreted it in the same verse, immediately in the next line completing, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*" (1:21). St. Paul also indicated to that verse and explained it when he said, "*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out*" (1 Tim. 6:7).

2) Both Job and David speak of the soul being brought "back from the pit" to live again upon the earth. (Job 33:23-28 & Psalm 103:4).

This is not true at all and none of them talked about bringing the soul back from the pit. nor living again on the earth. This is what Job exactly said:

*He restores to man His righteousness. And he looks  
"Then he - the mediator - says, 'Deliver him from*

*going down to the Pit; I have found a ransom...for at men and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it did not profit me.' He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit and his life shall see light."* (Job 33:23-28).

It is very clear that this saying was of Elihu (32:2) and did not talk about "*bringing the soul back from the pit*", but on the contrary, about the result of repentance and believing in Christ - the Mediator and Redeemer - and accepting His ransom which will restore to man His righteousness and remove his punishment "*I have sinned and He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit*". So the meaning here is that Christ saved the soul of the sinner from "going down to the pit" of hell, or from destruction. And again it has nothing to do with reincarnation.

David said nothing in Psalm 103 about "bringing back the soul from the Pit", but he was thanking God for "forgiving all his sins, and redeeming his life from destruction". Again, this has nothing to do with reincarnation.

3) Burke claims that when Jesus talked with Nicodemus about the second birth in John 3:3,5 he was talking about reincarnation!

This is a false, strange and ridiculous interpretation. Jesus was talking here about the spiritual birth by baptism. He explained it when He said, "*Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" (Jn.3:5).





4) Burke says in his second book, "Reincarnation and the Church" page 2: "Further, Jesus Himself stated that Saint John the Baptist was the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah (Matt. 11:10,14, 17:10-13), and when He asked the disciples: *Who do men say that I, the son of man, am?*" they answered: *Some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets*" indicating a strong belief in reincarnation among the common people (Matt.16:13,14).

We disagree with George Burke that "Jesus stated that "John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah". The Lord Jesus never said that, and never ever pronounced the word reincarnation by His Holy lips, but this is Burke's own wrong interpretation to what Jesus said. He is trying to put words in Jesus' mouth after two thousand years! The correct interpretation of Jesus words, which is agreed upon from all commentators, old and modern, that John the Baptist was one fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi 4:5,6 as it is explained by the Archangel Gabriel in Luke 1:17 which says about John the Baptist that, "*He will go before Him in the Spirit and power of Elijah*", meaning that John the Baptist will be filled with the same Holy Spirit that filled Elijah, and there will be many similarities between them. Any Sunday School student now knows that, both John the Baptist and Elijah lived in the wilderness and mountains, both of them were great men of prayer and fasting, both were clothed with camel's hair with a leather belt around their waist, both were very brave and courageous and rebuked kings, both were men of revival to their generation... etc.

So, once again these verses had no relation to the doctrine of reincarnation.

Regarding what the apostles said to Jesus, that the common people "**thought**" of Him, because of the similarities between Jesus and those prophets

in some attributes as courage (Elijah) or sadness (like Jeremiah) etc,...or else we would have to say that Jesus Christ Himself also was a reincarnation to all those prophets at the same time! In the same manner Jesus denied reincarnation in answering the question about the born blind man, that "*Neither this man nor his parents sinned*" (John 9:3).

And we have no need to say that all the so-called quotations -he said mentioned in other book from the Church fathers like St. Clement of Alexandria and St. Gregory of Nyssa, Origen and St. Augustine, are not honest quotations, but fabricated, abrupted, and out of context. It is sufficient to note, in addition to all the refutations that were mentioned in the previous issue (please return to it), that the doctrine of reincarnation according to Abbot Burke, believes that, "Jesus of Nazareth was at first the "original" man Adam...and Adam evolved through life after life to be Joshua and Elisha, which is why Moses and Elijah appeared at His Transfiguration when he was Jesus!" Isn't that a joke? This is an unbelievable interpretation which requires us to cancel our minds in order to understand it! What further need do we have to continue discussing this madness.

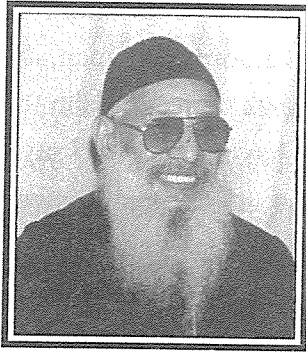
From all that, we conclude that reincarnation is a pagan, Indian, Buddhist belief, and Satan wanted to revive it these days in a Biblical shape to deceive the simple Christians, and throw doubts on most of the Christian Dogmas like the Divinity of Christ, His redemption and salvation, the resurrection of the body and the last judgment, the reality of heaven and hell. It is against both Christianity and Judaism.



# Shallow Men

By Fr. Gewargios

Translated by George Gad



Shallowness is the standing characteristic of our era. A few would get into the depth of matters; this fact of life does not only apply to spiritualities but also to other worldly matters. The problem that faces Christians now is the superficial look they have vis a vis spiritualities. Probably this emanates from our way of life, living as we are in a world of humans who think, read and acquire general knowledge in a superficial way. Such a superficial look at spiritualities has a stupendous impact upon the life of Christians; for example:

1. A shallow man is shaken by hardships, anguished by tests and worn out by the strains of life. On the other hand, a Christian who gets to the very depths of Christ's love can co-exist with all these hardships through patience and perseverance, knowing that, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II Cor. 4:17)

2. A shallow man is easily entangled in the claws of satan; he is seduced by satan and persuaded to embrace bodily lusts and material enticements. But one who deeply loves Christ behaves according to the dictates of the spirit, recognizing that one who behaves according to the carnal desires of the body shall never be reconciled with God. Harboring such a deep love in Christ makes man live in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with affections and love." (Gal. 5: 22-24)

3. A shallow man's life does not embody the love of Christ. Such a man will therefore sacrifice His teachings without compunction. But those who penetrate deeply into the root, the love of Christ, will join Paul the Apostle, when he said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword? ---For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, not things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39)

4. A shallow man will quarrel and fly into a rage to defend his inflated dignity, ego, wealth or worldly pleasures. But those who deeply love Christ will bear any and everything with love and patience, bearing in mind the words of Paul the Apostle, "Be kindly affectioned one to the other with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another." (Rom. 12:10) They sacrifice everything, even themselves for the sake of their brethren and love to give rather than receive.

5. A shallow man will always waver between what is spiritual and what is corporeal. He is lukewarm in his spiritualities, ready to leave the Church and its meetings for the sake of worldly joys. Therefore he is rejected by Christ who said, "I will spew thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16) The Lord wants us to be warm in the spirit. The person who gets down to the root of Christ's love is always watchful over his life, training himself to lead a pious life because of "having promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come." (I Tim 4:8) He is dedicated to enjoying the means of grace and is strict in every aspect of his behavior.

6. A shallow man does not bear the correct teachings, "hewing itching ears." He does not want to listen to the words of truth and would only listen to teachings which are not resented by his desires. The person who loves



Christ deeply has a discerning spirit and knows what is appropriate and what is not; what will be a foundation stone for his life and what will cause it to collapse. He knows what is proper for him as a son of God, feeling free with Christ and will not be enslaved by any habit for he will allow nothing to dominate him. He knows that he is the temple of God and that the Holy Ghost is in him, and therefore he refuses to adulterate the temple of God. Before his eyes he always puts the undying inheritance of Heavenly Jerusalem, " And there in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." (Rev. 21:27)

7. The Jews led a shallow life in their relation with God. Even their Scribes and Pharisees, while praying, acted like hypocrites; they feigned praying or fasting and gave their alms ostentatiously to be seen by men. They were therefore rebuked by our Lord Jesus Christ who called on them to be unknown while doing such acts. He gave them examples, that of the penitent publican and the widow who donated the two mites. The Scribes and Pharisees pretended to be pious before the people, " and for a pretence make long prayers." They lived according to the letter of the law and put aside the spirit of worship, " and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," and therefore Christ cursed them eight times and compared them to " the whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and uncleanness."

God's eyes penetrate the pitch darkness. He knows our inner thoughts and examines our hearts. He is the examiner of our hearts and kidneys and knows the inner thoughts of man. Jesus knew the inner thoughts of the people of Israel and that within, " Ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." Therefore God said of the sons of Israel, " This people draw near to me with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me." ( Is. 29:13)

Let us all fathom to the depth of love of Jesus Christ and get to the root of matters when we pray or read the Holy Bible, throw our nets to catch fish and enjoy the blessings of the catch saying unto our Lord: " Master.. at Thy word I will let down the net" (LK 5:5) for " I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13).

## Smile

1. "It was a terrible day at the office, dear. The computer stopped and we all had to think."

2. A young man came for an interview with a bank president. "Tell me, sir, how did you become so successful?"

- "Two words."

- "And what are they, sir?"

- "Right decisions."

- "How do you make right decisions?"

- "One word... experience."

- "And how do you get experience?"

- "Two words."

- "What are they?"

- "Wrong decisions."

3. - "My brother is working with five thousand people under him."

- "Where?"

- "Mowing lawns in a cemetery."

4. A preacher went to preach for a country church and took his little daughter with him. Near the front door was a box labeled "Offering". The preacher dropped in a quarter. After the church service the treasurer said to the preacher, "We pay you whatever is in the offering box." When the box was opened, the preacher found only his quarter.

"See, Daddy," his little girl noted, "If you had put more in, you would have gotten a lot more out of it."

5. **Lawyer** (over the phone): "They can't put you in jail for that."

**Client:** "Oh, yeah? Where do you think I'm phoning from?"

6. **Judge:** "I find the defendant innocent."

**Defendant:** "Thank you, Your Honor. Does that mean I can keep the money, that I've stolen?"

7. "Doctor, what is wrong with me?"

"Madam, you are too fat, you use too much rouge and lipstick, you get your hair bleached, you smoke too much, and one other thing - you are in the wrong office. The doctor is next door. I am nothing but a newspaper man."