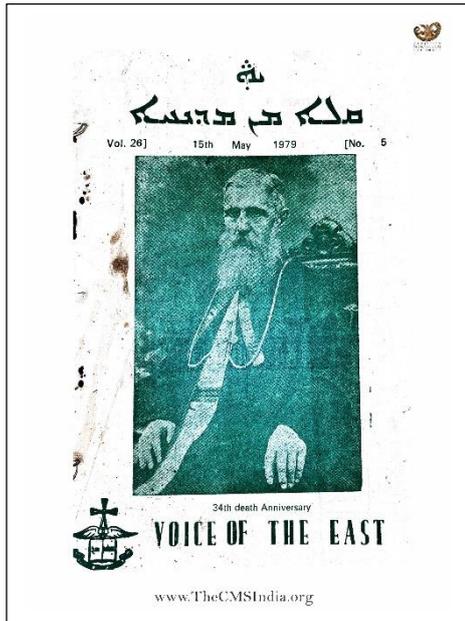


Voice of the East –1979,May (Ancient Church of the East)



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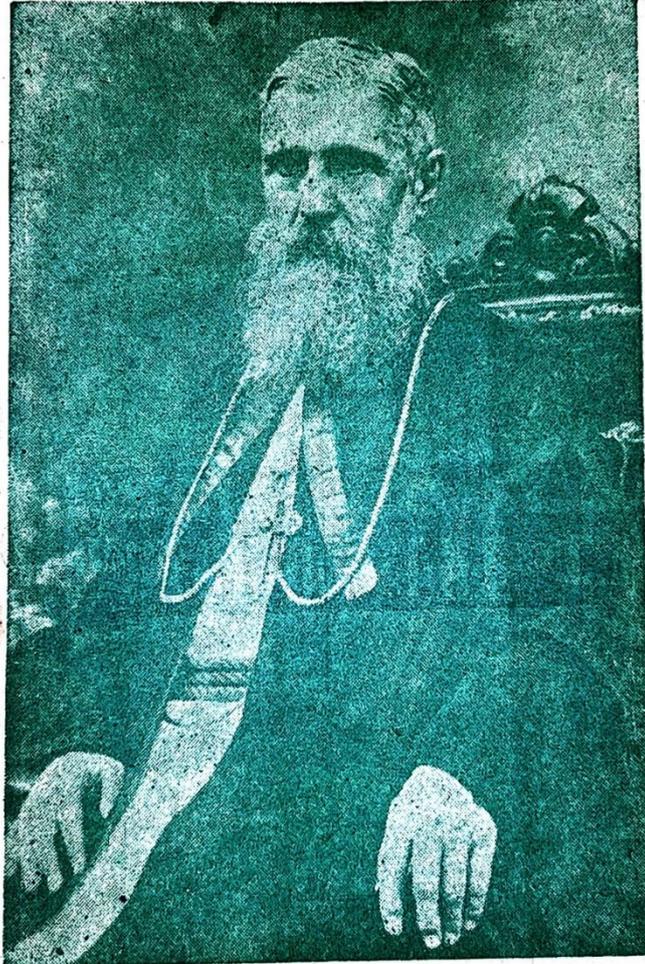
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Vol. 26]

15th May 1979

[No. 5



34th death Anniversary



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2. Sacraments of the church of the East
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4. Teach Yourself Aramaic
5. News

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VOICE OF THE EAST

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1979 May 15

Book 5

Teaching Ministry

EDITORIAL

One of the tasks of the Church is to teach its history and faith to its members. In this modern world where literacy rate is higher and facilities to print books are enhanced, the Church should take the task of teaching ministry seriously. Occasionally we get enquiries asking for books on our faith in English and Assyrian. Some of the Assyrian books do not have English translations yet. Some do not have any Aramaic edition. Even when there are Aramaic editions, translations into modern spoken Assyrian is needed.

Church of the East was a great Church. It has voluminous books written by scholars such as Mar Aprem, Mar Narsai, Mar Thimotheus Patriarch, Mar Abdisho of Nisibis and others in early centuries. Since thirteenth century nothing much has been written due to various reasons.

Catholic Chaldeans under Assemani, Paul Bedjan and others did some printing in the Aramaic language. Alphonsa Mingana did some translations into English in the present century. Among Anglicans of the last century George Badger, A. J. Maclean and others did some translations. It is upto us today to carry on such a literary work so admirably done by our forefathers. A lot of manuscripts ought to be edited and printed for the first time. Some books can be translated into English and made available even to the members of other Churches who are interested. Money also should be available for publishing such books. Alphonsa Mingana, the Chaldean priest, encouraged to go to England and translate Assyrian books into English. The Woodbrooke Studies series were published as a result of that. Scholars as well as patrons should work together to bring out some good books for the glory of God

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Sacraments of the Church of the East

By Mar Aprem

(Rev. P. L. Francis)

It is left to the blessed lot of Mar Aprem Metropolitan of India to bring into light in detail, the faith and practices of the most ancient "but little known" Church of the East in a series of small books of which the present one, "Sacraments of the Church of the East," is 9th in the line. Including the Introduction and the Conclusion His grace has described in seven chapters about the topic noted above mainly helped by the book "Marganeetha", (Pearl,) written by Mar Abdeeshoo (1318) the famous canonist of the Church of the East.

Chapter I describes about the meaning and efficacy of sacraments which "are not mere signs or outward expression but holy services necessary for the spiritual growth in the life of man in this Carnal world" They are seven in number, such as Baptism, Oblation (Holy Qurbana), Priesthood, the Oil of unction (anointing) absolution (remission of sins) Holy Leaven and the sign of the Cross. Instead of the last two the other churches have included marriage and extreme unction. As these two are mere services the Church of the East has not considered them as sacraments.

Chapter II deals with Baptism, rather a long service, as instituted by Jesus Christ. It is the initiation service for the membership of the church conducted by ordained priests and deacons. Adults and infants, baby girls of 40 days and boys of 56 days, are baptised by immersion in special fonts built in the Baptism Room in the Church. Before immersion they will be anointed with holy oil and the fonts consecrated. A Deaconess will assist in anointing a grown up woman. During this service there will be readings from the Epistle and the gospel. Confirmation will be given and also holy Qurbana soon after Baptism.

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Chapter III explains about five other sacraments excepting 'Holy Qurbana.' The nine orders of Priesthood as explained in the book 'Messianic Teachings' written by the late Mar Thimotheus Metropolitan are referred to here. These nine are under three main orders of Shamshana (Deacon) Qashisha, (Priest) and Episcopa (Bishop). While (Karoya) reader is the lowest order, the Patriarch occupies the highest rank. Holy services are officiated by Qashisha and the others above him. The Deacon is to assist in the service. Each of these orders are functioned by Jesus Christ. The oil of unction (Misha d Mshehutha) is an apostolic tradition. Pure Olive oil is consecrated and kept inside the Altar and used for baptism and for blessing the Altar. Absolution (remission of sins) is given by Christ to the priests. Holy Leaven (Malka) service is the renewal of the original loaf used by Christ during the last supper. Tradition says that a portion of the same was secured for the Church through St. John the Disciple. The sacrament of the sign of the living cross is exclusive to this Church. According to Mar Abdeshoo 'cross is that by which Christians are even kept and by it all other sacraments are sealed and perfected.' No crucifix is used but a simple and plain cross. It is seen on the top of the Church building, inside the Church, and worn by people both young and old on chains on their necks and also kept in the prayer room in each house on the eastern wall. It is venerated with all awe and joy.

Chapter IV describes at length about the holy Qurbana. The Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mari, known as 'Liturgy of Nestorians' is noted. The order of Mar Theodorus and that of Mar Nestorius are also used. The author has clearly described the history of the liturgy in the absence of other publications in the Church. His Grace quotes what

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J. M. Neale the great anglo Catholic says about this liturgy "though lamentably low is one of the earliest and perhaps the very earliest of the many formularies in the Christian sacrifice." It was George Badger of England who has introduced the Nestorian Liturgy to the English speaking world. Only ordained clergy can enter the altar and that with proper vestments and fasting. Sacraments are administered in both kinds. The theory of transubstantiation is not followed. It is through faith the member receives them as the true body of Christ with all awe and veneration. The outline of the Liturgy clearly leads one to understand its progress.

Chapter V brings into light the theology of the Church of the East. It follows the Nicene creed. It is holy, apostolic, Catholic and one, which is built on earth by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. Prayers are conducted for the dead for mercy from God. The festivals and memorial services are also described here. The seven festivals of our Lord called 'Iede d Maranaya', those of the Pentecost, sanctification of the Church and the festival of the Cross are explained. Memorial service of St. John the Baptist, St. Thomas and those of others are described. The Julian Calendar is followed which was the universal observance until the 17th Century A. D.

Chapter VI deals with Piety. Monasticism fasting and abstinence are described here. Image worship is unknown.

The book concludes by winding up the explanations regarding the most ancient liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, about Baptism and the other five sacraments - The absence of monastic life in India is noted though a small beginning is made now. The absence of images and statues are easily noted in this Church. (Con.)

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Teach Yourself Aramaic

INTRODUCTION

This book is for the beginners who desire to learn the words of Jesus Christ contained in the four gospels. The main selection is from the sayings of Jesus Christ. The Lord's prayer and, the Beattitudes recorded in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, the seven "I am"s from the Gospel of St. John, the seven sayings from the Cross taken from different Gospels and many other direct statements of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ are reproduced here.

After some initial lessons on the alphabets, vowels etc, the student is encouraged to plunge into the sayings of Jesus. Vocabulary of a thousand words are given from time to time so that the student can quickly learn the language. In vocabulary and in other sentences the Aramaic is written in its own script. The second column gives the pronunciation. The third column is for its meaning in English. The fourth column is left blank except in the few initial lessons where the translation in Swedish language is provided. Because this book is primarily meant for several people in Sweden who expressed an earnest desire to learn the language of Jesus. But it is also meant to be used by Germans, Indians and others who may write the translations of their own language in the fourth column. Anybody who knows English can use these lessons and learn the Aramaic language.

I am not trained to be a teacher of that language. But I have used it for the last 25 years for liturgy. Moreover, I was forced to teach this language to the students in our Seminary near Trichur, Kerala, India when better qualified teachers were not available. I do not claim to be an expert in Aramaic. But I felt a need for such a book. Therefore when the request was made to me by Dr. Bertil Persson of St. Ephrem's Institute, Solna, Sweden for such a book I ventured to write it.

Although I have written several books on the biographies of my predecessors and on the history and faith of

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our Church, the writing of a language text book is a new experience to me. I have found help from the Aramaic Grammar of Fr. Thomas Arayathinal published in Kerala in 1957 which I have been using since I began to teach this language in 1963 in our Seminary. The selection of lessons from the sayings of Jesus was a difficult task. But the Gospels provided the necessary help. For the few words in Swedish I used, I got help from the small book "Aramaic Idioms of Eshoo (Jesus), Explained" published from St. Ephrem's Institute' Solna, Sweden.

The lessons are simple enough for a 5 year old child to learn. At the same time it is also useful for an old man to learn this language for the first time. If a student studies this book regularly for four months, I hope that he will have a working knowledge of this ancient language.

Aramaic is not much used for speaking. It is a liturgical language for the Assyrians. The Assyrians who live in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and who are scattered throughout Europe, America, Australia, etc. speak modern Assyrian language. Their spoken language is slightly different from the liturgical language which they call Lishana Atieka (old language). This book will be useful to them to understand their modern Assyrian too as most of the words are the same.

In the liturgical language too, I have followed the East Syrian script and pronunciation used by Christian denomination often called Nestorians. It is slightly different from West Syrian script and pronunciations. They say Kadisho Aloho when we in Eastern Syriac say Kaddisha Alaha for Holy God.

I am grateful to Mar Narsai Press, Trichur, one of the best Printing Presses in the world, where Aramaic language could be printed. I hope that generations to come will use this book to learn the language of Jesus Christ.

Metropolitan's Palace
MAR APREM
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Lesson I

TWENTY TWO LETTERS

Aramaic has 22 letters. They are written from right to left.

Swedish or German or any language	English	Pronunciation	Aramaic
A	Alap		ܐ ܐ ܐ
B	Beth		ܒ
G	Gamal		ܓ ܓ
D	Dalath		ܕ
H	He		ܗ
W	Wav		ܘ
Z	Zain		ܙ
H	Heth		ܚ
T	Teth		ܛ
Y	Yod		ܝ
K	Kap		ܟ ܟ ܟ
L	Lamad		ܠ ܠ
M	Mim		ܡ ܡ
N	Nun		ܢ ܢ
S	Semcath		ܣ
E	E		ܝ
P	Pe		ܦ
S	Sade		ܨ
Q	Qop		ܩ
R	Resh		ܚ
Sh	Shin		ܫ
T	Taw		ܬ

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NEWS

Iraqi Contract with India

May 5 – India has won a contract for a big housing project in Iraq worth of 315 million rupees. (40 million dollars). This is the sixth project awarded to India by Iraq in 1979 raising the total value of projects to 800 million rupees. India will construct 1400 prefabricated housing units in Barrak, Raiji and Kirkuk to accommodate people working in oil projects there.

General Transfer

After three years in various parishes the clergy of the Church of the East in India will be going into different parishes with effect from 31 May, 1979.

34th death anniversary

The 34th death anniversary of Mar Abimalek Timotheous Metropolitan was observed on 1 May 1979, with Qurbana and Anneedha served near histomb. In the evening meeting Mar Aprem Metropolitan presided. Rev. P. L. Francis BA. L. T., Rev. T. R. Jos BA, Rev. C. V. Timothy and Rev. M. P. Lazar spoke on the occasion.

Mar Abdisho Thondanatt

A biography of Mar Abdisho Thondanatt is being prepared by Mar Aprem. Mar Abdisho took consecration in 1862 in Qudshanis. Any body who has letters and documents regarding Mar Abdisho who died in 1900 A. D. may kindly inform Mar Aprem soon. The book is planned to be published in October,

History of Eastern Churches

Arrangements are made to translate the Malayalam book Histoy of Eastern Churches into English. Those of you who are interested to have a copy, please place your orders soon. This book deals with all the Eastern Churches in India and abroad.

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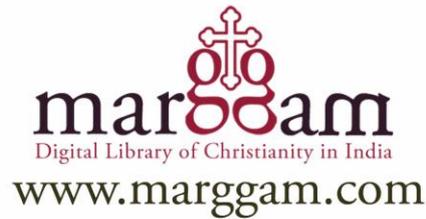
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