

Questions and answers about the Christian Faith (also referred to as the ‘Long Catechism’)

[This is an adapted version of the Catechism entitled: ‘*Questions and Answers About True Religion*’ by Theo Sorensen - published in China in the early 1900s].

Questions and answers about there being only one God

Chapter 1

1. **Q:** What is the origin of true religion?
A: The true religion originates from (the intrinsically existent) God.
2. **Q:** Who is God?
A: God is the one who created the heavens, the earth, man, and all the different kinds of creatures.
3. **Q:** How many Gods are there?
A: There is only one God, but this one God is a completely perfect composite of the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit. All three constitute only one God.
4. **Q:** Are the three jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*) that are mentioned in the doctrine of Buddha the same as the intrinsically existent God?
A: No, they are not the same. According to the doctrine of Buddha, the Three Jewels refer to the Buddha, the Teaching (*dharma*), and the community of monks. But according to the Christian faith, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are not three separate Gods. These three are the same entity.
5. **Q:** Is the blue sky God?
A: No. The blue sky was created by God. It is not God. For example, something that is made by a workman is less important than the workman himself. Likewise, God is inconceivably greater than the blue sky.
6. **Q:** Is Buddha Sakyamuni God?
A: No, he was not God. Buddha Sakyamuni was a prince who was born to King Shudhodana of the Sakya clan in India, some 2,520 years ago. Later, he became a great master. But the beginningless God has always existed and was present before Sakyamuni was born.

7. **Q:** Are the community of monks God?

A: No, they are not God. They are only people who follow the Buddha's doctrine.

8. **Q:** Does God have a form that we can see with our eyes?

A: No. God is the immeasurably great flawless Spirit. He cannot be seen with our physical eyes.

9. **Q:** If God cannot be seen with our (physical) eyes, how do we know God exists?

A: If you look at the sky, the earth, man and all the different creatures, we will know that God truly exists. For example, if you see water, you will know there is a spring or some other source nearby. If you see a tree, you know it has roots. If you see a house, you know someone built it. So, if you see the world and everything in it, you know there is a God who created it all.

10. **Q:** How did God come into existence?

A: God is without beginning and without end. He is the immeasurably great flawless Spirit. For him there is no birth and no death.

11. **Q:** Where does God live?

A: Unlike man, he is formless. He is the immeasurably great Spirit and is everywhere (omnipresent).

12. **Q:** What is the nature of God like?

A: God is utterly excellent (holy) and totally pure. His nature is full of mercy, immeasurably compassionate and loving. He is the epitome of true perfection.

13. **Q:** Is God the all-knowing one (omniscient)?

A: Yes, God is omniscient.

14. **Q:** Is God all-powerful (omnipotent)?

A: Yes, God is omnipotent. He created the heavens, the earth, mankind, and everything there is in the world. He is the all powerful, immeasurably great Spirit.

15. **Q:** What does the word God mean?

A: The Tibetan word *dkon mchog* means the three (Buddhist) jewels as explained above (see question 4). However, when Christians talk about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, they frequently use the term *rang grub + dkon mchog* which means the intrinsically existent God. However, sometimes they don't use the complete name and just say *dkon mchog*. They understand this term to mean there is nothing rarer than the intrinsically existent God, and there is nothing that is superior to him.

16. Q: Does God have another name?

A: Yes, God has many different names. He is called *Yahweh*; the *Father in Heaven*; and the *Lord of Heaven*. He is also known as the '*immeasurably great Spirit of Truth*'. However, the nature (and the essence) of God are combined into a single composite.

17. Q: What does the name 'Yahweh' mean?

A: Yahweh is a Jewish word which means 'intrinsically existent'. God has always existed without beginning or end.

18. Q: What does the name 'Father in Heaven' mean?

A: God created everything. He also created mankind. Because of his great compassion he provides their food, clothing and all their necessities. This is why he is called the Father in Heaven.

19. Q: What is the meaning of the term 'Master of Heaven'?

A: 'God' and 'Master of Heaven' mean the same thing. Master means Lord. God is the Master of Heaven. There is nothing higher and greater than him. That is why he is called the 'Lord of Heaven'.

20. Q: What is the meaning of the term the 'immeasurably great Spirit of Truth'?

A: Unlike man, God is formless. This is why he is called the immeasurably great Spirit. In this world there are many man-produced idols (images) of false gods made of gold, silver, earth, stone and wood (but God is like none of these). This is why he is called the immeasurably great Spirit of Truth.

21. Q: In whom should the people of this world put their faith?

A: They should believe in the one true eternal God who is the immeasurably great Spirit of Truth and is without birth and death.

**Questions and answers regarding the creation
of the heavens, the earth, man and all animate and inanimate
things**

Chapter 2

22. Q: How did the heavens, the earth, mankind and everything on the earth come into existence?

A: God created the heavens, the earth, man, the world and everything in it.

23. Q: How did God create the heavens and the earth?

A: God simply commanded, and without any instrument or tool, the heavens and the earth came into being out of nothing (ex-nihilo).

24. Q: Can a man make something in the absence of an instrument or tool (i.e. pre-existing material)?

A: No, he cannot. No one in the world has the power to do this except God.

25. Q: According to the Buddhist way of thinking, the sky and the earth came into being without a Creator. Is that true?

A: Let me reply with an example: no one has seen a house that has not been built by someone, nor has anyone ever seen a house that has sprung up by itself. If even a small house like this cannot exist without someone building it, then how can the sky and the earth, which are much bigger, exist without a creator?

26. Q: Why did God create the heavens, the earth, mankind, and everything in that is in the world?

A: God created everything according to his will. Everything that he created was very good (and in perfect harmony). There was no discord at all.

27. Q: How many days did God take to create the heavens, the earth, man, the world and everything in it?

A: According to the Scriptures (called the Bible in English), it was all created in six days.

28. Q: What did God create on the first day?

A: On the first day, God created the heavens, the earth and light.

29. Q: What did God create on the second day?

A: On the second day, God created space and called it sky.

30. Q: What did God create on the third day?

A: On the third day, God separated the sea from the land. Dry ground appeared and the waters were collected together to form oceans. And God created different kinds of plants and trees on the land.

31. Q: What did God create on the fourth day?

A: On the fourth day, God created the sun, the moon and the stars.

32. Q: What did God create on the fifth day?

A: On the fifth day, God created the different kinds of fish in the sea and the various kinds of birds that fly in the sky.

33. Q: What did God create on the sixth day?

A: On the sixth day, God created the reptiles, the four-legged animals and various kinds of other creatures. And finally he created man.

34. Q: What did God create on the seventh day?

A: On the seventh day, God did not create anything. He rested and blessed the seventh day.

35. Q: What did God name the first man that he created?

A: He named the first man Adam, and as for the woman, he named her Eve.

36. Q: How did God create that man?

A: God created the body of the first man from the dust of the earth. Then he breathed life into it and a man (with a mind) came into being. Thus man became a living person.

37. Q: Is the spirit of a man the same as his body?

A: No. When God first created man, he made his body from the dust of the earth. And when he dies, his body will become dust again and be absorbed back into the earth. However, the spirit of a man is not created from any material substance. This is why it will not disintegrate (be destroyed) when a person dies.

Questions and answers on the origin of sin

Chapter 3

38. Q: What is the name of the dwelling place that God gave to the first two parents of the human race?

A: They lived in a thoroughly peaceful and enjoyable garden called Eden in which there was absolutely no sin and no suffering.

39. Q: What were the hearts of Adam and Eve and what did they think?

A: In the beginning, they were both kind-hearted. But later they disobeyed God and the root of sin came into existence. When this happened, their kind hearts became evil and filled with evil thoughts.

40. Q: In that way did Adam and Eve disobey God?

A: They both disobeyed God by eating fruit from a particular tree that God told them not to eat.

41. Q: What was the punishment for eating that forbidden fruit?

A: Even though the punishment for eating fruit was not severe, the sin of disobeying God was very grave indeed.

42. Q: How did God punish Adam and Eve for their sin?

A: God banished them both from the beautiful place called '*the Garden of Eden*'. And as a result of their sin, the suffering of sickness, old age, and death began.

43. Q: What were the descendants that came after Adam and Eve like?

A: Because Adam and Eve both disobeyed God, their kind hearts changed and became evil. This affected all the descendants of Adam and Eve and their hearts were also evil.

44. Q: So does that mean all human beings are sinners?

A: Yes, that is correct. The body, speech and mind of every individual person is sinful.

45. Q: How many different kinds of sin are there?

A: There are two main categories of sin: (1) The sin that is inherent in us (that is original sin); and (2) the sin that everyone does themselves (by their own volition).

46. Q: What is the meaning of inherent or original sin?

A: As a consequence of Adam and Eve's sinful actions, now every single person is born a sinner.

47. Q: What is the meaning of 'the sin that a person does of their own volition'?

A: It is the sin that a person happily chooses to do as a consequence of having an evil mind.

48. Q: How do we know if we have a propensity to sin?

A: We can know this by examining the actions of our body, speech and mind, and seeing whether or not we have kept God's Ten Commandments.

49. Q: Where are the Ten Commandments of God written down?

A: God's Ten Commandments are written in the Bible.

50. Q: What do the Ten Commandments tell us?

A: In brief, they are as follows:

God said:

1. I am your God. You should not keep idols in your possession.
2. Do not make an idol of anything - it does not matter if it is a creature of the sky above, the earth below or anything that is in the water. Do not even worship or bow down to any kind of idol.
3. Do not say the name of your God meaninglessly.
4. Do not forget to keep Sunday as a special day of rest.
5. Show respect to your parents.
6. Do not take the life (kill) of a human being.

7. Do not commit sexual sin.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not give false witness.
10. Do not covet.

51. Q: What must I do in order to obey the Ten Commandments?

A: You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your soul (i.e. with your will and emotions).

52. Q: What should our attitude be towards our parents?

A: We should respect our parents (and help them).

53. Q: How should we relate to our neighbours and other people?

A: We should love our neighbours and other people just as we love ourselves.

54. Q: What is the punishment for not observing God's Ten Commandments?

A: In this life we will experience many different kinds of suffering. And after death we will fall into hell.

55. Q: If it is like this, then how can a sinner be delivered and set free from sin?

A: We need to have a complete change of heart (i.e. our mind must be transformed) and if we put our faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ, he will cleanse our sins. (If we sincerely confess, repent and take refuge in Jesus Christ, he will forgive us and set us free from the power of sin. Moreover, he will cause us to want to live virtuously and to do good to others.)

Questions and answers on Jesus Christ

Chapter 4

56. Q: Who is Jesus?

A: Jesus is the Son of God.

57. Q: What is the meaning of the name 'Jesus'?

A: The name Jesus means Saviour.

58. Q: Is Jesus a man and, if so, where was he born?

A: Yes, he was born a real human being with a physical body (he was not a mere emanation). His birth place was in Israel, in the province of Judea.

59. Q: If he was a human being then is he also God?

A: Yes, he is God. But he took human form when he came to earth.

60. Q: How do we know Jesus is God in human form?

A: We know that Jesus is God in human form from his teachings, his miraculous deeds, and from his own words concerning himself.

61. Q: Is there any other sign that shows Jesus is God incarnate?

A: Yes. There are many other signs. The most notable sign is his resurrection from the grave where his dead body had been laid.

62. Q: In what town was Jesus born?

A: Jesus was born in a Jewish town called Bethlehem.

63. Q: Who was Jesus' mother?

A: She was a virgin named Mary who was overshadowed (pervaded) by the Holy Spirit.

64. Q: Should we worship Mary just like we worship God?

A: Although Mary was Jesus' mother, she was only a human being. Therefore, it is inappropriate to offer her worship (or pray to her).

65. Q: How long ago did Jesus come into this world?

A: He came into this world just over 2,000 years ago.

66. Q: How many years did Jesus remain in this world?

A: He lived here for 33 years.

67. Q: How many years did Jesus teach and perform miraculous signs and wonders?

A: He taught and performed wonderful signs for three years.

68. Q: What is the difference between Jesus and the people of this world?

A: The people of this world (having been tainted by sin) are sinners. But Jesus is completely perfect and has always been totally unstained by sin.

69. Q: Is Jesus the Saviour of the Jews only?

A: No. He is the Saviour of all nations.

70. Q: How can Jesus save the people of the world from sin?

A: In order to save the sinful people of this world he hung and died on a cross. (Jesus voluntarily submitted himself to death in order to set people free from the power and consequences of sin).

71. Q: What is the significance of Jesus' death on the cross?

A: The punishment that sinners deserve is death. Jesus was perfect and without sin. He bore the punishment of peoples' sin when he died on the cross. By doing this, he redeemed us from sin.

72. Q: Who crucified Jesus?

A: The Jewish authorities and many people asked the Roman Governor Pilate to crucify Jesus. He agreed and Jesus was killed. At that time, it was customary for criminals to be killed by crucifixion.

73. Q: Why did these people want Jesus crucified?

A: They wanted him crucified because they disagreed with his teachings and were outraged by his claim to be the Son of God.

74. Q: What happened after the death of Jesus?

A: After Jesus died, his dead body was laid in a tomb. But on the third day, he rose from death, and during the next forty days he appeared to many of his followers. After this, he ascended to heaven.

75. Q: What is Jesus doing in heaven now?

A: He is at the right side of God and is praying for us sinners.

76. Q: Will Jesus return to this world?

A: Yes. He will return on the last day of the world. On that day he will judge all the people who are alive as well as all those who have died.

Questions and answers about the Holy Spirit

Chapter 5

77. Q: Who is the (incomparably excellent) Holy Spirit?

A: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (although three) are miraculously established as a single entity.

78. Q: How does the Holy Spirit help us?

A: The Holy Spirit leads the people of this world from darkness of sin to light. He (kindles in people's hearts) the desire to abandon sin and have a transformed mind. The Holy Spirit helps them to want to put their faith in the Lord Jesus.

79. Q: By exerting self effort is it possible to transform one's mind and to turn away from doing wrong?

A: No, it is not possible. Without the grace and help of the Holy Spirit, a person is not able to transform his (or her) mind and abandon evil thoughts and actions. Unless a person is *born again*, he cannot receive a renewed mind.

80. Q: What is the meaning of the term ‘to be born again’?

A: A person who has had a change of heart and received a new mind as a result of having abandoned his sinful ways through the power of the Holy Spirit is said to be ‘born again’. Jesus said: “I most certainly assure you that no one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again.” (John 3 v 3)

81. Q: How can a person receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit?

A: We can pray in the name of Jesus and ask God to give us the Holy Spirit.

Questions and answers about the holy assembly of Christians

Chapter 6

82. Q: What is the meaning of Christ’s holy assembly (i.e. the church)?

A: Because Jesus himself founded the holy assembly of people it is called Christ's holy assembly (or church).

83. Q: What should characterise the members of Christ's holy assembly?

A: In their behaviour they should be like Jesus. Such people have abandoned sin, evil thoughts, negative actions, and have become genuine disciples of Jesus. They are being changed day by day into the likeness of God’s Son (Jesus Christ).

84. Q: Who can join Christ’s holy assembly?

A: It does not matter if a person is young or old, man or woman, rich or poor, important or insignificant. Anyone who recognises he is a sinner and takes refuge in the Lord Jesus as his Saviour - that person can join Christ’s holy assembly.

85. Q: What commitments do people make who become disciples of Jesus?

A: There are two main commitments. The first commitment is to take baptism. The second is to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

86. Q: What is baptism?

A: Those who have joined the Church take part in the ceremony of baptism. It is administered in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (It is for those people who have individually decided of their own free will to put their faith in the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.)

87. Q: What is the significance of taking baptism?

A: Baptism is a sign. It signifies the purification of sin's defilement, and an empowering from the Holy Spirit. It is also a declaration that from henceforth the person will be a disciple of Jesus Christ and will follow his teachings and tell others about him.

88. Q: What is the Lord's Supper?

A: It is customary for those who are members of the Church to gather together regularly and eat a small piece of bread and take a sip of grape juice or wine. This practice is called 'The Lord's Supper'.

89. Q: What is the significance of taking the Lord's Supper?

A: The custom of taking the Lord's Supper is to remember that Jesus Christ hung and died on a cross in order to take upon himself the punishment for the sins of all people, past, present and future.

90. Q: What is the significance of eating the bread?

A: When we eat the bread we remember that Jesus Christ offered up his body as a sacrificial offering for our sins when he died on the cross.

91. Q: What is the significance of drinking grape wine?

A: It is to commemorate and remember that Jesus' blood was shed when he died on the cross in order to deliver us from the power and defilement of sin. (This is why Christians say their sins are cleansed by the blood of Jesus.)

92. Q: What should Christians do before they eat the Lord's Supper?

A: Everyone should examine his or her own heart. Having examined oneself, the person should decide if he (or she) is worthy to eat the bread and drink the wine. (In order to be worthy, one must repent of wrongdoing.) However, if someone who has not repented, and is therefore unworthy, partakes of the bread and grape wine, it is clear the significance of the body of Jesus has not been grasped. Moreover, such a person is inviting judgment upon themselves.

93. Q: Is it customary for Christians to offer worldly goods when they worship?

A: No. There is no point in offering worldly gifts because the greatest and best offering was presented to God by Jesus when he died on the cross. At that time, Jesus willingly offered up his precious life as a complete and final sacrifice. There is now no need for any other offering. (Jesus died once and his death cannot be repeated. He died in order to benefit all people everywhere. He will gladly save all those who ask him for help. He truly is the Saviour of the world.)

94. Q: What should Christians do on a daily basis?

A: Christians delight to pray daily and offer praise and thanks to God and to read the Holy Scriptures (the Bible). Not only should Christians abandon negative actions of

body, speech and mind, they should be ready to (help and) encourage others to trust in Jesus.

Questions and answers on the Holy Scriptures

Chapter 7

95. Q: What does the term Holy Scriptures (or Bible) mean?

A: The Holy Scriptures are a collection of very special writings that contain God's instructions (for mankind). By reading these Scriptures we learn about who God is.

96. Q: How many parts are there in the Holy Scriptures?

A: They are broadly divided into two main parts: the Old Testament (or covenant) and the New Testament (or covenant). These two parts contain many treatises and chapters.

97. Q: How did the treatises in Old Testament scriptures originate?

A: They originated from God. Many years before Jesus Christ was born into this world, God instructed the Jewish prophets - through the Holy Spirit - what they should write.

98. Q: Where did the treatises in the New Testament come from?

A: They originated from God. God - through the Holy Spirit - commanded some of his disciples what they should write.

99. Q: Is there a difference between God's Holy Scriptures and other books in the world?

A: All the other books in the world originate from human intellect and ideas of people, but the Holy Scriptures are not like that. They were written by people under the urging of the Holy Spirit. It means that God's holy people wrote down what the Holy Spirit told them.

100. Q: Is it possible for us to understand the meaning of Holy Scriptures?

A: (The writings in the Bible are unique because they originated from God. The Old Testament also contains many accounts about the history of the Jewish people). If we pray and ask God to help us he will enable us, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to understand the meaning of the Holy Scriptures.

101. Q: But what if we are unable to read?

A: You should listen very carefully when the Scriptures are read out loud and try to memorise them. You should also think deeply about their meaning. If you cannot

understand something, ask others who can read to explain it to you.

102. Q: What do the Holy Scriptures tell us to do?

A: In the New Testament we are exhorted to have a complete transformation of heart, to put our trust in the Saviour Jesus Christ and to offer praise and thanks to God. As a consequence of having faith in him, we receive new life that is indestructible and eternal.

103. Q: What does it mean to ‘have a change of heart’?

A: It means we feel very sad about our sin and the evil actions we have done. Having repented, we abandon those negative thoughts and actions and we take refuge in our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We ask him to forgive us.

104. Q: Why does it say you should put your trust in Jesus?

A: Although Jesus is the Saviour of the world it is nevertheless necessary for each individual person to ask him to become their own personal Saviour. (You do this by thanking him that he offered up his life as a sacrifice for your sin when he died on the cross. Having done this, you then put your trust in his unsurpassable virtue. (righteousness).

105. Q: What does it mean to offer worship to God?

A: It means to gladly offer praise and thanks to God from the depths of one’s heart.

106. Q: What is the meaning of eternal life?

A: At the time of death, when our mind and body separate, the conscious awareness (the spirit) will forever remain in the presence of God. This is the meaning of eternal life. (In the New Testament Gospels, Jesus talks about life that is indestructible and eternal. Every human being is born possessing destructible life by virtue of being a descendant of Adam and Eve. When we ask Jesus to forgive us and to save us, his gift to us after we die will be indestructible eternal life in heaven.)

Questions and answers about prayer

Chapter 8

107. Q: What is meant by the term ‘to pray’?

A: It means to offer praise and thanks to God. It is necessary to confess our sins. We should pray for ourselves and for other people and we may also ask God for the gifts (blessings) he has promised to give us.

108. Q: What may we request in prayer?

A: When we pray we should confess our sin and ask God for his protection. We may pray for the holy assembly of Christians (the church), your family, and for all the people on this earth. Besides these, we can also pray for many other matters.

109. Q: How many types of prayers are there?

A: There are many types of prayer. For example, here are four of them: praying with just the mind; secret prayer; praying with one's family; and communal prayer.

110. Q: What does praying with just the mind mean?

A: It means saying nothing from one's mouth, but praying to God from the depths of one's heart.

111. Q: What is secret prayer?

A: It means praying alone where there is no one else around.

112. Q: What is family prayer?

A: It is when our parents, spouse, children and any other members of the household gather together in the morning and in the evening to read the Bible and pray to God.

113. Q: What is communal prayer?

A: It refers to Christians all gathering together at the same time in order to worship and pray to God.

114. Q: Is there a specific place where we should we pray to God?

A: God is omnipresent. Therefore, it doesn't matter where we pray. We can pray in a church building, in our home, in a place where there is no one, or where there are many people. We can pray anywhere we like.

115. Q: In what customary position should our body be when we pray?

A: We can pray when kneeling, prostrating, standing, sitting or even when lying down on a bed or a mat. Our position is not important. Because God is Spirit, it is necessary for those who believe in him is to worship him in spirit and in truth.

116. Q: When you pray to God, is it a requirement to offer precious things such as gold, silver, a butter lamp or a scarf?

A: No. You do not need to offer any worldly material objects. Nothing is required but to offer God your complete devotion. A heart that is pure and sincere (is an acceptable offering and pleases God greatly).

117. Q: When you pray to God, through whose name should you call?

A: When we pray to God, we should pray in (through) the name of Jesus.

118. Q: What is the meaning of calling on the name of Jesus when we pray?

A: Because God is the intrinsically perfect formless and boundless Spirit, and we by contrast are mere sinners, it is not possible for us to pray directly to God. However, if we have a mediator then it is possible for us to pray to God. The Saviour Jesus Christ is our mediator and this is why when we pray to God we pray through the name of Jesus.

119. Q: If we want to pray to God, what attitude of heart should we have?

A: We should have a believing and true heart and we should pray with humility.

120. Q: If we pray with this kind of heart will we receive whatever we ask?

A: Yes. If whatever we ask pleases God and is in conformity with his will, it shall be granted and there is no doubt about it.

121. Q: What is the significance of the assembly of Christians gathering together on Sunday?

A: Because Sunday is the day when Jesus rose from the dead, Christians all over the world gather together in their respective countries to pray. They also listen to teachings and worship God together.

Questions and answers about the great hope that Christians have

Chapter 9

122. Q: What is the great hope that believers in Jesus have?

A: Believers have confidence that after death a believer's spirit (conscious awareness) will go to heaven. They also believe that on the last day their bodies will rise from the dead and be re-united with the spirit.

123. Q: What happens when a person dies?

A: When a person dies, the body and spirit separate.

124. Q: When the spirit and body separate, where do they go?

A: There are only two realms the spirit can go to. Either it will go to heaven or it will go to the hell realm.

125. Q: What happens to the empty body when it is separated from the spirit?

A: Since the body is made from dust, it will again go back to dust.

126. Q: What is heaven like?

A: Heaven is a place where there is no noise of suffering (i.e. there is no suffering). Heaven is extremely luminous and full of light. It is a place of perfect happiness and is full of joy.

127. Q: Who is in heaven?

A: In the realm called heaven, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are present. In their presence are the heavenly angels and those people who have been delivered from sin.

128. Q: What kind of place is the hell realm?

A: The realm of hell is extremely dark and is filled with suffering. Horrendously frightening evil spirits abide there.

129. Q: Who else abides in hell?

A: The chief of the evil spirits called Satan is there. His retinue of evil spirits accompanies him.

130. Q: At what time will sinners go to hell and those who [whose minds] are perfect go to heaven?

A: This will happen on the last day when all the dead have been raised to life again.

131. Q: Explain how the dead come back to life again.

A: On the last day of the world, the body and spirit will once again be joined together and then the dead will come to life again.

132. Q: How can a person come back to life again after his body has decayed?

A: At the very beginning, God created the first man from the dust of the earth. So it will be easy for him to bring the dead back to life on the last day.

133. Q: Is there a sign or any evidence that the dead can come back to life again?

A: Yes. The most significant sign is Jesus coming back to life on the third day after his death. There are many other signs that are mentioned in the scriptures.

134. Q: What will the body that is brought back to life be like?

A: Our bodies are made up of flesh and blood and are subject to decay, but the resurrected body that will be raised to life on the last day is a spiritual body. Because the spiritual body is imperishable, it cannot be destroyed.

135. Q: What will happen after the dead are raised?

A: When the Lord Jesus returns on the last day of the world, he will come as Judge. He will judge those who are alive at that time and also those who have died. All people will have to assemble together before him in order to receive judgement.

136. Q: When the time comes for the people who believe in Jesus to be assembled before him, should they be fearful?

A: No, they should not be afraid. A good child who is obedient approaches his (or her) parents joyfully and without any fear. (So too will those who have put their faith in Jesus approach him joyfully and without any fear.)

137. Q: How will sinners react when they are assembled before the Lord Jesus in order to be judged?

A: They will be fearful, like criminals who enter a court of law are fearful.

PRAYER and PRAISE

An Early Morning Prayer

I offer my praise to you Almighty precious God, the Father. I kneel down and fold my hands in praise to your great name. Thank you for the good night's sleep I had last night and for being able to wake up fully refreshed and to feel a sense of well-being. Lord, please be with me throughout this day. May whatever I do, speak and think today be according to your will. Please help me to overcome all the obstacles that come from (Satan) the evil one. Please help me not to give in to temptation and may I behave virtuously at all times. Please bless me so that not only will I receive benefit from you but may other people also receive benefit as a consequence of my actions. Please bless my family, my neighbours and all other people. Please listen to this my prayer that I offer in the name of the Saviour Jesus Christ. May this my prayer be fulfilled.
Amen!

Thanksgiving Prayer for Food

Oh! Merciful Lord God! I thank you for the food and clothing that you have provided for me since I was born up until today. Please bless this food that you have provided for me today. I offer thanks to you for your grace and great kindness in giving me this food and drink which I am about to consume. I praise the precious name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen!

An Evening Prayer

Oh! Incomparable Lord God! Please listen again to the prayers of us sinners. At a time when we [all of mankind] were plunged into great suffering and were unable to deliver ourselves - at that very time you sent your only Son, (Jesus Christ) from heaven to be the Saviour of the whole world. In order to deliver all people from the penalty of sin and to grant them salvation Jesus Christ offered up his own body as a sacrifice when he died on

the cross. May the precious name of God be praised. Lord, today you have provided us who are weak with everything that we needed. In addition, you have protected us from the evil one (Satan) and you helped us when we were tested. When we have undergone suffering you have granted us complete victory. We offer your precious name praise. You are full of compassion. We also ask that this very night you will bless us and show us your compassion. Please protect us from all of Satan's temptations and from all that would harm us - even in our dreams. Moreover, please also protect my family and my neighbours from Satan; from all sinful temptations and delusory obstacles. If it is according to your will may we arise tomorrow morning feeling refreshed. May we also gladly offer you praise from the depths of our heart(s). In addition, please bless us, enable us to perform our daily duties to the best of our ability. We offer this prayer in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. May our requests be fulfilled according to your will. Amen!

A brief explanation concerning prayer.

The three prayers mentioned above are an example of how Christians pray. However, those who have trusted firmly in the Lord Jesus have a custom of praying daily, not only for their own needs, but also for others' needs. They pray for provision of those needs not only in the immediate present but also in the days to come.

What do Christians believe? (The Apostles' Creed - adapted)

- (1) I believe in God, the Father Almighty, who is the creator of heaven and earth.
- (2) I believe in Jesus Christ, his [God's] only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
- (3) He [Jesus] suffered under [the Roman Governor] Pontius Pilate. He was crucified, and was buried.
- (4) He descended into the hell realm [of the dead].
- (5) The third day, he arose again from the dead.
- (6) He ascended to heaven and he is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
- (7) From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
- (8) I believe in:
the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic [i.e. universal] Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the [future] resurrection of the body,
and I also believe in [indestructible] life everlasting.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer
(An adapted version)

One of Jesus' disciples said to Jesus: "Lord please, teach us to pray." Jesus replied:

Oh, our Heavenly Father who dwells in the boundless heavenly realm:

- (1) May your Name which is famous everywhere be honoured and praised.
- (2) May your Kingdom be revealed to us.
- (3) May your will be visibly established in all parts of the earth just as it is established in the boundless heavenly realm.
- (4) Give us today our daily provisions (food).
- (5) Please cleanse and forgive our wrongdoing (our sins), just as we have forgiven (and not taken revenge) against those who have harmed us.
- (6) Please do not put us to the test [Do not let us fall into the situations which would hinder a virtuous mind and would instead generate a non-virtuous mind] but deliver us from evil.
- (7) For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours - now and forever.

Amen.

God's Great Commandment

Jesus said:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul (will and emotions) and with all your mind. [Body, speech and mind].

Love your neighbour just as you love yourself.

(Matthew 22: 37-38).

The catechism entitled 'True Religion' has now ended

An extract from a Buddhist Scripture:

Commit no evil deeds.

Perform all the virtuous deeds.

Tame your own mind.

This is the Buddha's teaching.

A Tibetan Christian wrote:

If you know that you are a sinner,
And if you trust in the Saviour Jesus Christ,
You will be set free from sin.

This is the teaching of Jesus.

* * * *

Additional notes:

Does God love us?

John 3 v 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (NLT)

1John 4 v 9 - 10. God showed us how much he loved us by sending his only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. (NLT)

