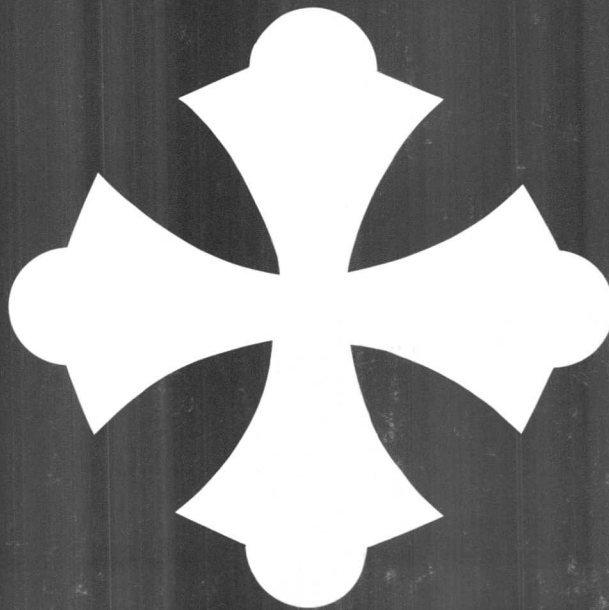


# COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 2, Number 3 ..... Fall 1981

- *Saint Mena of Egypt*
- *The Sacrament of Myron*
- *The Didascalia*



*Society of Coptic Church Studies*

# ***COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW***

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

### *A Cloud of Witnesses*

In this issue there are two articles about *St. Mena of Egypt*, whose martyrdom the Coptic Church commemorates on Hatur 15 (November 24) and who ~~Bishop Mena of Egypt~~, the superior of the recently reconstructed Monastery of St. Mena at Mareotis, for the introductory article about the Monastery. This is our second in the series of articles on the Coptic Monasteries. The first (Contemporary Life in an Ancient Coptic Monastery) appeared in Winter 1980.

The second article which deals with the *life of St. Mena* and the story of his relics has been written at the request of the Journal by *Magdi F. Malek, M.S.*, of Hackensack, New Jersey. He is the author of a 439-page book on St. Mena. (Alexandria, Egypt, 1963).

In this issue the reader is also introduced to three Church Fathers. *Father Tadras Y. Malaty*, the member of the Editorial Board, discusses the life and teaching of *St. Didymus the Blind*. This is our third article in our series *Fathers of the School of Alexandria*. In the Book Reviews section, "*The Harp of the Spirit*" is an introduction to St. Ephraem the Syrian; and *St. Shenouda the Archimandrite* is a book that has just appeared about this fifth century monastic Father.

### *The Word of God*

In the article "*Bible and Tradition*" we hear the direct words of the fifth century Father *St. Vincent of Lerins*. According to him Scripture must be interpreted in accordance with the Church Tradition, our guide being antiquity, universality and general consent.

"*A Question and an Answer*" is the title of a small article we translated from St. Mark Monthly Review (February, 1981). In it *Father Matta El-Meskeen* looks at Bible Study as a reaction of the soul depending on its spiritual level rather than a mental exercise.

### *Currents in Coptic Church Studies*

Two articles appear in this section. In his Arabic book "*On the Sacrament of Myron*", His Grace *Anba Gregorios*, bishop for higher theological studies in the Coptic Church, discusses the spiritual values of Chrismation. The many biblical and patristic references given in the book reflect the important place

this sacrament had in the early Church, and may be a reminder to the West where it has been either completely rejected or severed from Baptism and not given to young children.

***The “Didascalia—or the Teachings of the Apostles”*** is an 854-page work, in Arabic. The author, *Dr. William Soliman Kelada* is an authority on Church law and it took him over thirty years to write this book which includes three main sections:

1. *A critical study* of the Arabic manuscript of the Didascalia.
2. *Summary of the Christian Faith*. This part could have made a separate book by itself, and is probably the only recent attempt by a Coptic scholar to offer an Orthodox biblical theology.
3. *Contents of the Didascalia*. In this section, the author analyzed its teachings and rules and rearranged them as the basis for later Church laws.

*Editor*

# ***THE MONASTERY OF ST. MENA***

*His Grace, Bishop Mena Ava Mena*

## *History of the Monastery*

The monastery of St. Mena is situated at Mariut desert, 70 kilometers south west of the city of Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>1</sup> The monastery was established in the Fourth Century. Emperor Constantine I erected the first marble cathedral at the site where the relics of St. Mena were discovered in Mariut. It was built because his daughter was miraculously cured from her illness through the saint's intercession. The Cathedral was then dedicated to the name of St. Mena and consecrated on the 15th of Baouna (June 22).<sup>2</sup> During St. Athanasius time, expansion took place in the monastery (363-373 A.D.)<sup>3</sup> Emperor Arkadius (395-418 A.D.), at the request of Patriarch Theophilus (23rd Patriarch of Alexandria), built a larger Cathedral to accommodate the multitude of pilgrims and visitors who were attracted by the fame of the monastery. The Cathedral and its annexes were known to be masterpieces of art of its time. The vicinity surrounding the monastery was called then Martyropolis or the Marble City.<sup>4</sup>

## *The Evangelistic Role of the Early Monks of St. Mena*

It was the monks of St. Mena Monastery that carried the torch of evangelism to Ireland, and much is owed to those missionaries for the spread of Christianity there. The traces of their evangelistic mission could be followed through the writings of S. L. Poole: "Monasticism was a potent force in Egypt from very early times. Some have held that Irish Christianity, the great civilizing agent of the early Middle Ages among the Northern nations, was the child of the Egyptian Church. Seven Egyptian monks are buried at desert Uldith, and there is much in the ceremonies and architecture of early Ireland that reminds one of still earlier Christian remains in Egypt."<sup>5</sup>

Three manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin include the following litany: "Seven Egyptian monks in Desert-Ullaigh I invoke unto my aid through Jesus Christ."<sup>6</sup>

## *A Friend of the Saint Is Born:*

In August 2, 1902 a child called Azer was born at Damanhour, Egypt. He was the second child of a pious family. From his childhood, he was fond of hearing the history of the martyrs and saints, and their miracles, especially that of Saint Mena.

In February 25, 1928 he became a monk at Al-Baramus monastery, Scetis Desert under the name of Mena. After two years of formation in the eremitical life he entered a cave not far from the monastery. He went to the monastery only to get supplies of water and flour for baking his own bread. His strict personal purification involved days of fasting and hours of prayer. In 1936 he moved to a deserted windmill in old Cairo. He built a monastic cell and a small chapel. He slept on the ground in sackcloth. The reputation he had for holiness and the fact that he was sought out constantly for counsel and blessing made him known to the Coptic people, and his popularity and reputation have been notable assets to him in the great renewal he has effected in the Coptic Church.

*The Call of Saint Mena:*

In 1958 Fr. Mena Al-Muttawahad (the Solitary) sent a letter to his brother in Alexandria. He informed him that he had passed a sleepless night, wishing to lease a small piece of land at Mariut Desert. Fr. Mena wanted to build a monastic cell at this favorite spot where his intercessor and friend St. Mena once had been buried. The Solitary knew nothing of what Providence was preparing for him.

On May 10, 1959, Fr. Mena, the Solitary, was installed as Pope Kyrillos VI (Cyril VI), and a new era for the ancient Church of St. Mark began. Since His Holiness loved St. Mena from early childhood, he did not waste time in reviving the shrine of St. Mena. On November 24, 1959, the remembrance day of the feast of the Martyrdom of St. Mena, His Beatitude put the foundation stone for a chapel and monastery. These were located near the old site of the ancient monastery and the marble cathedral which were destroyed by the Beduins during the 10th and 13th centuries.

*The Revival of the Desert:*

On November 24, 1961, the monastery embarked upon an era of spiritual growth and architectural construction. Four monks served the liturgy daily in the chapel. Also one hundred acres of land around the monastery were bought from the Egyptian Government. This land is being vigorously reclaimed for agricultural purposes as well as new constructions to include new cells and guest rooms for those who wish to make retreats. In February, 1962, the relics of St. Mena arrived at the monastery. To meet the spiritual needs of the great multitudes of pilgrims who come to visit the monastery, a church with three altars was erected in 1963. Thousands still come to receive the blessings of the Saint, which necessitated the erection of a cathedral with seven altars in 1969. Prayers began in this cathedral in 1974.

*The Monks of Ava Mina:*

In the Monastery there are six reverend priests, eleven monks, twelve postulants and four elders of whom one is an American citizen. Most of the

inhabitants are graduate professionals such as medical doctors, engineers, chemists, accountants, and agriculturists. Everyone has his work and duties even the aged.

All visitors to the monastery are welcomed with sincere spiritual openness and joy in a spirit of honest human love.

*Footnotes:*

1. Kamel, Rev. Bishoi, St. Mena the Miraculous, Alex. Egypt, 1974 p. 35.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p. 36.
4. Ibid. p. 44.

# ***SAINT MENA OF EGYPT***

*Magdi F. Malek, M.S.*

## ***Introduction:***

St. Mena is considered one of the most popular saints in Egypt. He is well known as the “Thaumaturgus” because of the countless miracles God performed through him throughout the centuries.

The Coptic church commemorates his martyrdom on the 15th of Hatur, and dedication of his original church on the 15th of Baouna. He is commemorated also by the Latin and Greek churches on the 11th of November.

Numerous churches were built in St. Mena’s honor, in many countries.

The fame of St. Mena and his intercessions drew pilgrims from all over the world to his shrine in Mareotis. They came to the saint to be healed from their physical as well as spiritual sicknesses. They loved to enjoy the powers of the miraculous water springs his shrine had. His ampullae, which many pilgrims took back with them filled with the holy water, were found in many places around the world.

## ***Sources of St. Mena’s Biography:***

A number of manuscripts and books were written about St. Mena of Egypt. The oldest known manuscripts about him (written in Greek) go back to the fifth or sixth century.<sup>1</sup> The best source for his biography though, is some Coptic manuscripts which were written (translated) in the ninth or tenth century,<sup>2</sup> and were discovered only in 1910. In addition to the Greek and Coptic manuscripts, many Arabic<sup>3</sup> and Ethiopian<sup>4</sup> manuscripts about the saint have been studied and quoted by several Church scholars. The texts of all the above manuscripts have followed slightly different approaches which can be summarized as follows: (a) The Greek texts give an account of St. Mena’s life and martyrdom, then end by his burial. (b) The Coptic texts are divided into two distinct types. The first is similar to the Greek version, and the second has more detailed accounts of St. Mena’s origin, upbringing, sufferings, martyrdom, burial, his shrine, and his city until the Arab invasion of Egypt. (c) The Arabic texts take three different approaches. The first is similar to the Greek, the second is similar to the second Coptic text, and the third represents a combination between the first two Arabic approaches. (d) The Ethiopian texts took after the Arabic texts using two approaches. The first is similar to the Greek and the second is similar to the second Coptic text.



### ***Saint Mena's Biography:***

#### ***St. Mena's Family:***

St. Mena was born in the year 285 A.D. after long prayers and fasting by his Christian parents, "Eudoxius," his father, who was a governor under the Roman rulers, and "Euphemia," his mother who was full of godliness.

A few years before St. Mena's birth, his father was transferred from Egypt to the region of "Afrikia"<sup>5</sup> due to the evil slander of his covetous brother "Anatolios" before the Roman emperor "Carinos"<sup>6</sup>.

St. Mena was raised in a very religious household, among God-loving people. At an early age, he learned all about the holy books, and the teachings of the Coptic church.

#### ***On His Own With God:***

At the age of 11 (C. 296 A.D.), St. Mena's father died. After three more years, his mother followed his father through the path of all humans, and St. Mena had to face the world alone. However, due to his good upbringing, and his continuous spiritual relation with God, his reaction to his parents' departure was the distribution of his vast inherited wealth on the poor and needy. He preferred to spend all his time with God in church, to get to know Him more and to fill his life with holiness.

#### ***St. Mena in the Army:***

At the age of 15 (C. 300 A.D.), the region's new governor, a friend of St. Mena's father, talked him into joining the army under his command. In the army, St. Mena set a good example of humility, spirituality and mercy among his comrades. He did not allow himself to mix up with them and their worldly affairs, but kept good relations full of respect and cooperation with all of them.

St. Mena stayed in the army for about 3 years (C. 303 A.D.), when the Roman emperors "Diocletian" and "Maximian" issued their famous decree<sup>7</sup> which was intended against the Christians in particular. In that decree, the emperors ordered all peoples under their rule to worship the Roman gods (idols) "Apollo & Artemis"<sup>8</sup>.

#### ***St. Mena in the Desert with God:***

At that time, St. Mena decided just to get away from the army and all the worldly evil matters, and live solely for his God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Soon afterwards, he gave all his belongings to the poor, and fled to the Lybian desert away from everybody. His disappearance did not go unnoticed, but after some time people forgot about him. In the desert, St. Mena found the proper setting for himself to be alone with God, nothing else was there to distract him from living for God. There, he started to fulfill his heart's desire for being one with God whom he loved with all his senses.

To sustain himself, St. Mena used a few camels to help him in cultivating some land for food. Every evening, the camels used to greet St. Mena by

bowing their heads towards him before they retire, as if they could see God's presence in him.

*The First Revelation:*

After spending about five years in the desert with its open horizon and clear sky, living with God in a one continuous prayer, fasting and contemplating the One he loved and yearned to be with forever, St. Mena finally had a close encounter with God. In this revelation, the sky seemed to open up, and the angels and saints floated around him. Then came that lovely voice telling him that he had been chosen to be God's own soldier, and he would be rewarded with three holy crowns for his celibacy, solitude, and martyrdom. The heavenly voice told St. Mena also that a shrine would be named after him, and people from all over the world would visit it to worship God.

When the revelation was over, St. Mena realized that this was God's sign for him to go back to the world to be a witness for His glory.

*St. Mena Confronts the Evil:*

In the morning, St. Mena went back to the city which he had left a few years before. There, a large gathering had assembled in the stadium to celebrate the feast of the city's patron idol. There was a show on the stadium field when St. Mena arrived. He was determined to make his appearance so obvious to everybody, so he decided to enter the stadium field to announce his beliefs in front of all the people. He shouted, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."<sup>9</sup>

By interrupting the festival and declaring his faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, St. Mena captured the attention of all present, including the region's new governor who sent his guards to arrest our saint. After a little questioning, the governor and his cabinet recognized St. Mena and they tried very hard to convince him to decline from confessing his faith in Christ. Our saint was very firm, and never yielded to their requests. The governor then ordered his guards to put St. Mena in prison and to bring him back for trial on the next day.

*St. Mena's Trial:*

In front of the Roman governor's court, the saint was questioned in detail about his beliefs, and the reason for his spectacular return to the city. With a heart full of peace, St. Mena explained how he left the army to dedicate himself to the service of the Lord, and how he preferred the wild life in the desert over the disturbed living among his army comrades, following unjust orders of the pagan rulers.

They promised him much if he just ignored his beliefs. But as a solid fighter, he stood in front of the whole court and revealed to them how much God's love was doing to him, how eager he was to depart and to be with Christ, and how insignificant the worldly matters were to him. The governor

finally realized how resolute St. Mena was and decided that the only way to get to him was through torture.

*St. Mena's Suffering for Christ:*

At the beginning, the governor ordered St. Mena's arms and legs to be stretched and tied to four pegs on the ground, then to have him whipped with ox thongs until his body was all covered with blood. When this was done, they bound him on a "rack" and pulled his joints without any mercy. Afterwards, they pulled the saint's body back and forth over sharp pins fastened to the ground. Then they rubbed his wounds vigorously with a rough piece of cloth. They followed that by scorching his bleeding body with flaring torches for a few more hours. Then he was beaten with sticks, whipped again, slapped and punched on the head until he lost most of his teeth.

Through all that torture, St. Mena was getting closer and closer to God. That much pain his body was suffering, led him, most probably, to live in our Lord's crucifixion, ignoring his own feelings and uniting his body with that of his Savior. In the depth of his pain, he might have been seeing, by his soul's eyes, the skies getting opened, the angels and saints watching from above, supporting and encouraging him to be patient until the end, when they all meet in the presence of God.

During these proceedings, the governor was constantly trying to persuade St. Mena to put an end to his suffering by renouncing his Christian faith. He promised him wealth and power in return. St. Mena repeatedly rejected the governor's demands. This aroused the governor's rage and he continued to torture the saint. Finally, the governor gave up and decided to send the saint to another governor, to complete his trial.

*The Second Revelation:*

Under guard, they carried St. Mena in a boat heading to a nearby region, to be put on trial conducted by its governor. When they reached their destination, they kept him in prison where he met many other Christians waiting for their trials. In prison, with all the pain generated from the wounds his body had, St. Mena kept encouraging and cheering the other prisoners, urging them to continue their endurance until the end, to receive their crowns when they meet their Savior.

In the middle of the night, while St. Mena was praying, the darkness of prison suddenly was replaced by an extremely bright light coming from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In the midst of his heavenly joy, St. Mena heard the Lord telling him how pleased he was with his courage, and how much glory awaited him at the end of the road. The Lord told him also that his sufferings would end soon, and his body would be honored by many, and because of him, many people would know God. After that revelation, St. Mena waited impatiently for the moment when he would leave his body to be united with God.

*St. Mena's Martyrdom:*

The following morning, St. Mena was put on trial. As usual, the governor tried to convince him to reconsider and to go along with the emperor's orders. Then, the torture started again. They whipped St. Mena a hundred times with ox thongs, then they tried to cut his bleeding body with an iron saw. To their surprise, the saw melted in their evil hands.

Finally, when the governor found that there was no use for his attempts to change St. Mena's mind, he ordered to have him beheaded. How happy our saint was when he heard the good news, his passport to Heaven where he always wanted to be. In a big gathering, they dragged him to the execution site, while he was rejoicing for his coming happiness when he would meet with the Lord. He turned his head to the Lord and said, "Lord, I thank you for everything." Then he turned his neck to his executioner. In seconds, the sword went down and St. Mena's head rolled away from his body to announce the culmination of our saint's spiritual struggle. This happened around the year 309 A.D.

*The History of St. Mena's Relics:*

After beheading St. Mena, the merciless governor was not satisfied because he felt that the saint did win the battle, so he ordered his subordinates to burn the body to get rid of all that the saint left behind.

They made a huge fire, then they threw the body in its midst. For their surprise, the fire seemed to have no power over St. Mena's body. They kept the fire burning for three full days without any result. Finally, they gave up and left the body alone.

That night, some of the saint's friends put the fire out and picked up St. Mena's body and head unburnt, and wrapped them inside a scented cloth. Then they carried the wrapped body to the house of one of them, where they placed it temporarily inside a special compartment.

*St. Mena's Relics in Egypt:*

After a few years, it happened that a commander by the name of Athanasius was ordered to bring his troops from the region of "Afrikia" to Alexandria in Egypt, to help in defending the "Mareotis" area, in Egypt's western desert, from the attacks of the "Berbers". Athanasius was a good friend of St. Mena before his martyrdom and was one of the group who took care of his body.

Athanasius decided to take the saint's relics with him to Egypt. He wanted the saint's blessings and protection to accompany him and his troops in their trip.

After sailing for five days, they arrived at Alexandria with St. Mena's relics. When the people of Alexandria heard about the Saint's relics, they came to receive his blessings.

The troops put the relics on a camel and went to Mareotis to fight with the Berbers.

After winning their battle, Athanasius' troops tried to take St. Mena's relics back with them. Every camel they put the relics on, refused to move. Then they understood that this was a sign for them to leave the relics there. So they built a small tomb on that spot and placed the saint's relics in it. Then they sadly returned.

*St. Mena's First Church:*

A few years passed by before St. Mena's relics were known to be capable of healing the sick. A crippled boy happened to crawl to the saint's tomb outside his town and he spent the night there. In the morning, he was able to walk straight. The boy's family realized that the miraculous cure of their son was due to God's power in St. Mena's relics. They spread the news all around and many sick people were brought to the saint's tomb and were healed.

When the fame of St. Mena and his miraculous powers spread everywhere, the Pope of Alexandria, St. Athanasius (328-373 A.D.), ordered a big church to be built on that site. During the patriarchate of the Pope Anba Theophilus (385-412 A.D.), St. Mena's church had to be enlarged to accommodate for the constantly increasing number of people who came from all over the world to be blessed by our saint.

*The City of St. Mena:*

During the reign of emperor "Zeno" (474-491 A.D.), a city started to develop around St. Mena's shrine in Mareotis. That was due to the huge number of pilgrims visiting the region, seeking God's blessings and powers invested on St. Mena.

The fame of the city reached its apex during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries. St. Mena's shrine was considered "the pride of all the Lybian desert".<sup>10</sup> However, the city with its glorious shrine started to decline in the ninth century, possibly due to religious persecution, depopulation, and Bedouin intrusions.<sup>11</sup> By the 13th century, St. Mena's city turned to a deserted ruin. The saint's relics were buried under his collapsed shrine.

*The Rediscovery of St. Mena's Relics:*

Near the end of the 13th century, the box containing the saint's relics was found among the remains of the city. The plunderers who found it, were unaware of what they had. The box was brought to Cairo to be sold for a price. But God arranged that St. Mena's relics ended up in the possession of a virtuous man who kept them in his house and took good care of them. When the time came, God revealed the identity of the relics, and they were taken in a big caravan to the saint's church in "Fum El-Khalig", Cairo.

St. Mena's relics remained in that church since the 14th century. Parts of the saint's relics though, were removed recently to be placed in two other

churches: the first was in 1959 A.D. to St. Mena's monastery in old Cairo, and the second was in 1962 A.D. to the newly founded monastery in the deserted city of the saint in Mareotis. St. Mena's city had been discovered earlier by the German Kaufmann expedition in July 1905.

Nowadays, the glory of the golden era of the old City of St. Mena seems to be returning to the region by the efforts and prayers of the departed Pope Anba Kyrrilos VI (1959-1971), and our beloved present Pope Anba Shenouda III.

### ***Footnotes***

1. Greek texts were published in the following books:  
     \*Analecta Bollandiana, 3, Paris & Brussels 1884, pp. 258-270.  
     \*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca Sociorum Bollandianorum, Brussels 1895, pp. 91 (1250, 1253, 1254).  
     \*Acta Sanctorum (Propylaeum), Brussels 1902, Col. 211.  
     \*Krumbacher, Miscellen Zu Romanos, Munich 1907, pp. 31-43.
2. Some Coptic texts are preserved in the P. Morgan Library, N.Y.C., and were published in:  
     \*James Drescher, Apa Mena, Cairo 1949.  
     \*Mari Mena Sunday School, Mari Mena El-Agayebi, Alexandria, Egypt 1963.
3. Arabic texts are preserved in many libraries in Egypt, like the Coptic Museum's and the Coptic Patriarchate's in Cairo, and the Syrian Monastery in Wadi El-Natrun.
4. Ethiopian texts were published in the following books:  
     \*W. Budge, texts relating to St. Mena of Egypt, London 1909, pp. 39-58.  
     \*Chaine, Zur Ikonographie der Minas Ampoulen, Cairo 1910, pp. 33-45.
5. Its present location is believed to be in NW Lybia.
6. Ruled 282-284 A.D.
7. Issued on February 23, 303 A.D.
8. These two idols are of Greek origin.
9. Romans 10:20 (A quote from Isaiah 65:1).
10. According to the writings of Sophronius (560-638 A.D.) CF. Patrologia Graeca, 87, 3, C. 3596.
11. CF. J. Drescher, Apa Mena, Cairo 1949.

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1. Coptic:  
     \*Pierpont Morgan's Library, N.Y., N.Y.: #590, 585 & 575.
2. Arabic:

\*Syrian Monastery's Library, Wadi el-Natrun, Egypt: #315, 265, 295, 267 & 252 (History).

\*Coptic Patriarchate's Library in Cairo, Egypt: #48, 59 & 60 (History).

\*Coptic Museum's Library, Old Cairo, Egypt: #472, 471 & 469 (History).

3. Ethiopian:

\*British Museum's Library, London, Great Britain: #689 & 660 (Oriental).

\*Antoine Abbadie's Library, Paris, France: #92 & 179.

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1. Mari Mena, Fleming Sunday School, "Mari Mena el Agayebi"

2. James Drescher, "Apa Mena", Cairo, Egypt 1949.

3. W. Budge, "Texts Relating to St. Mena of Egypt and Canons of Nicae", London 1909.

4. C. Kaufmann, "La Decouverte des Sanctuaires de Menas", Alexandria, Egypt 1908. (In French).

5. Otto Meinardus, "Monks & Monasteries of Egyptian Deserts", Cairo, Egypt 1961.

6. R. P. Cheneau, "Les Saints d'Egypte", 2 vol., Jerusalem, Palestine 1923. (In French).

7. D. D. O'Leary, "The Saints of Egypt", New York 1937.

8. B. Evetts & A. Butler, "The Churches & Monasteries of Egypt (by Abu Salih)", 1895.

9. E. Amelineau, "La Geographie de l'Egypte a l'Epoque Copte", Paris, France 1893. (In French).

10. Rev. John el-Subky, "The Story of Mari Mena el-Agayebi", Cairo, Egypt 1948. (In Arabic).

11. The Society of Mari Mena el-Agayebi in Alexandria, various publications. (In Arabic).

12. Analecta Bollandiana.

13. Bulletin de la Societe d'Archeologie Copte.

14. Bulletin de la Societe d'Archeologie d'Alexandrie.

15. Papers of the British School in Rome.

## ***Bible and Tradition***

### ***According to St. Vincent of Lerins***

*St. Vincent was a monk of the monastery of Lerins, situated in the Gulf of Genoa. His fame rests upon his treatise "A Commonitory Against Heretics", which he wrote in 434 A.D., three years after the ecumenical council of Ephesus. The part which appears here has been taken from the second and fifth chapters of this treatise. The text is adapted from the translation of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.*

#### **Teaching in the Church**

I have often inquired earnestly and attentively of very many men eminent for sanctity and learning, how and by what sure and so to speak universal rule I may be able to distinguish the truth of Catholic faith from the falsehood of heretical pravity; and I have always, and in almost every instance, received an answer to this effect: That whether I or anyone else should wish to detect the frauds and avoid the snares of heretics as they rise, and to continue sound and complete in the Catholic faith, we must, the Lord helping, fortify our own belief in two ways; first, by the authority of the Divine Law, and then by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

#### **Interpretation of the Bible in the Church**

But here someone perhaps will ask, Since the canon of Scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself for everything, and more than sufficient, what need is there to join with it the authority of the Church's interpretation? For this reason—because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters. . . . Therefore, it is very necessary, on account of so great intricacies of such various error, that the rule for the right understanding of the prophets and apostles should be framed in accordance with the standard of Ecclesiastical and Catholic interpretation.

Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that *faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all*. For that is truly and in the strictest sense "Catholic," which, as the name itself and



the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universally. This rule we shall observe if we follow universality, antiquity, consent. We shall follow universality if we confess that one faith to be true, which the whole Church throughout the world confesses; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is manifest were notoriously held by our holy ancestors and fathers; consent, in like manner, if in antiquity itself we adhere to the consentient definitions and determinations of all, or at the least of almost all priests and doctors.

### **Testimony of Earlier Fathers and Martyrs**

But do we say this . . . out of hatred to novelty and zeal for antiquity? Whoever is disposed to listen to such an insinuation, let him at least believe the blessed Ambrose, who, deploring the acerbity of the time, says, in the second book of his work addressed to the Emperor Gratian: "Enough now, O God Almighty! have we expiated with our own ruin, with our own blood, the slaughter of Confessors, the banishment of priests, and the wickedness of such extreme impiety. It is clear, beyond question, that they who have violated the faith cannot remain in safety."

And again in the third book of the same work, "Let us observe the precepts of our predecessors, and not transgress with rude rashness the landmarks which we have inherited from them. That sealed Book of Prophecy no Elders, no Powers, no Angels, no Archangels, dared to open. To Christ alone was reserved the prerogative of explaining it. (Rev. 5:1-5). Who of us may dare to unseal the Sacerdotal Book sealed by Confessors, and consecrated already by the martyrdom of numbers, which they who had been compelled by force to unseal afterwards resealed, condemning the fraud which had been practiced upon them; while they who had not ventured to tamper with it proved themselves Confessors and martyrs? How can we deny the faith of those whose victory we proclaim?"

We proclaim it truly, O venerable Ambrose, we proclaim it, and applaud and admire. For who is there so demented, who, though not able to overtake, does not at least earnestly desire to follow those whom no force could deter from defending the faith of their ancestors, no threats, no blandishments, not life, not death, not the palace, not the Imperial Guards, not the Emperor, not the empire itself, not men, not demons?—whom, I say, as a recompense for their steadfastness in adhering to religious antiquity, the Lord counted worthy of so great a reward, that by their instrumentality He restored churches which had been destroyed, quickened with new life peoples who were spiritually dead, replaced on the heads of priests the crowns which had been torn from them, washed out those abominable, I will not say letters, but blotches of novel impiety, with a fountain of believing tears, which God opened in the hearts of the bishops?—lastly, when almost the whole world was overwhelmed

by a ruthless tempest of unlooked for heresy, recalled it from novel misbelief to the ancient faith, from the madness of novelty to the soundness of antiquity, from the blindness of novelty to pristine light?

But in this divine virtue, as we may call it, exhibited by these Confessors, we must note especially that the defence which they then undertook in appealing to the Ancient Church, was the defence, not of a part, but of the whole body. For it was not right that men of such eminence should uphold with so huge an effort the vague and conflicting notions of one or two men, or should exert themselves in the defence of some ill-advised combination of some petty province; but adhering to the decrees and definitions of the universal priesthood of Holy Church, the heirs of Apostolic and Catholic truth, they chose rather to deliver up themselves than to betray the faith of universality and antiquity. For which cause they were deemed worthy of so great glory as not only to be accounted Confessors, but rightly and deservedly to be accounted foremost among Confessors.

# BIBLE STUDY

## *A Question and an Answer*

***Father Matta El-Meskeen***

One of the monks posed this question: On my readings of the Holy Scripture, I encountered various methods that attracted me to follow:

1. The accurate comparison between the personalities and incidents of the Old Testament and Christ, word to word and incident to incident, a comparison that arouses the soul's interest and joy to discover the analogy.

2. Applying the words directly to oneself so they come to be from the Lord to me. This renders me very close to Him. He enlightens my life and reveals my deficiencies. In this method there is a high spiritual satisfaction. However, it lacks the comparison in the first method.

3. Applying the words to oneself directly while considering that the power of the word and its influence come from Christ, its source and from the prophets, apostles and saints whose lives demonstrated it successfully. Here the word flows in its normal course to dwell in me and become in control of my soul.

4. Following the cross references that lead to vivid topics which penetrate the whole Bible. Here the soul gets a taste of eternal life and the union with God. It is entertained to the Lord's treasures and His kingdom. One tends to forget here the meal hours and bedtime. But this method requires too much time.

I like all these methods and follow them disregarding time limitations. But which one is the best for me? Is it possible to unify them in one spiritual reading considering that I am a very slow reader, I am not acquainted with speeding up in prayer or in reading but through them I feel a growth in spirit and an increasing divine love day after day?

### **Answer**

Each of these reading methods gets a special mental and spiritual response. This response depends on interior basic factors.

#### *First Degree*

When the mind is active it starts to consider comparisons, circumstances, and analogies of situations and events while it clearly sees the link between the

Lord's deeds. This is a useful method that has a great mental satisfaction; but it fades away with time and the soul gets but a little benefit unless it leads to the second degree.

*Second Degree*

When the spirit is more active than the mind it fastly absorbs from every word and every event the truth beyond the mind without much interference from it. This includes linking, induction . . . etc.; and hence it fascinates the spiritual conception, and thrills and activates the soul. However, there has to be a follow-up and an increase so that the spiritual consciousness may widen up and become able to react directly to the word.

When the spiritual consciousness is very active and the body is consequently isolated to some extent and not intermingled with mental or bodily senses, the word gets in directly as spirit and life. It penetrates man's inner soul, nourishes it and favors its growth till it brings it up to the source of life. The spiritual consciousness therefore becomes a new powerful means that excels the mind and is capable of understanding everything in life in a new spiritual way.

Therefore, to be in control of the method of reading is almost impossible for the spiritual person. What actually happens is that the inner state displays itself and decides the method of your reading. However, the practice of the first degree elevates man spontaneously to the second degree. Perseverence in the second degree paves the way to the third degree.

(Translated by Mrs. Nabila Banout)

## **FATHERS OF THE SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA**

### ***St. Didymus The Blind***

*Father Tadros Y. Malaty*

Didymus was born about 313 A.D.; he lost his sight at the age of four. He never learned to read in a school, but through his zest for education he invented the engraved writing to read with his fingers, fifteen centuries before Braille used it. He also used to learn by heart the Holy Bible and the Church doctrines.

St. Athanasius did not hesitate to place him in the highly responsible position as Head of the School<sup>1</sup> (346-398 A.D.).

Among his pupils were St. Gregory the Nazianzen, St. Jerome, Rufinus and Palladius. St. Jerome mentioned him repeatedly as his “master”,<sup>2</sup> praised his learning, and testified to his influence on the divines of his time in the West as well as in the East.<sup>3</sup> Rufinus<sup>4</sup> calls him a ‘prophet’ and an ‘apostolic man’.

#### ***His Asceticism***

It is not only by his learning that St. Didymus attracted the attention of his contemporaries; but also by his asceticism. He lived almost a hermit’s life. St. Antony visited him several times and Palladius paid him four visits during a period of ten years. He narrates these two stories about him,<sup>5</sup>

“Once when he tried to make me say a prayer in his cell and I was unwilling, he told me this story: Into this cell Antony entered for the third time on a visit to me. I besought him to say a prayer and he instantly knelt down in the cell and did not make me repeat my words, giving me by his action a lesson in obedience. So if you want to follow in the steps of his life, as you seem to, since you are a solitary and living away from home to acquire virtue lay aside your contentiousness.

“He told me this also: ‘As I was thinking one day about the life of the wretched Emperor Julian—and by reason of my thoughts I had not tasted bread even up to late evening—it happened that I saw in a trance white horses running with their riders and proclaiming, ‘Tell Didymus, to-day at the seventh hour Julian died. Rise then and eat’, they said, ‘and send to Athanasius the Bishop, that he too may know’. ‘And I marked’, he said, ‘the hour and month and week and day, and it was found to be so’.”<sup>6</sup>

Socrates, the Church historian, mentions that St. Antony, perceiving the learning and intelligence of Didymus, addressed him saying, "Didymus, let not the loss of your bodily eyes distress you; for you are deprived of such eyes merely as are the common possession of gnats and flies; rather rejoice that you have eyes such as angels see with, by which the Deity himself is discerned, and His light comprehended."<sup>7</sup>

### ***HIS WRITINGS***

#### ***1. EXEGETICAL WORKS:***

Palladius states that he interpreted the Old and New Testaments word by word. According to Jerome, he composed commentaries on the Psalms, Job, Isaiah, Osea and Zacharias. Casiodorus mentions also a commentary on the Proverbs. Some of the papyri discovered at Toura in Egypt in 1941 contain excerpts of considerable length from Didymus' commentaries on Genesis, Job and Zacharias.

The large number of quotations extant enables us to gain an impression of Didymus' allegoric and mystical method of exegesis which proves him a true follower of Origen. Like the Alexandrian master, he showed an interest in textual criticism and compared the different manuscripts of the Saptuagint as well as the Hexapla. But his endeavor to determine the exact reading did not prevent a freely figurative interpretation. Thus he was convinced that the Old Testament contains everywhere an important Christian message and that every psalm points to Christ.<sup>8</sup>

He also composed commentaries on some books of the New Testament such as the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Acts, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians.

#### ***2. ON THE TRINITY***

This work in three books, composed between 381 and 392 A.D., survived perhaps for it was not marred by Origenism.

#### ***3. ON THE HOLY SPIRIT***

The Greek original has been lost, while a Latin translation is extant.

#### ***4. AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS***

This treatise is extant in Greek and consists of 18 short chapters.

#### ***5. OTHER WORKS***

In his work "On the Trinity" Didymus refers to another work of his pen which he calls "THE FIRST WORD". He also refers to his treatise "SANC-TARUM VOLUMEN" in his work "On the Holy Spirit" 5, 12.

According to Socrates,<sup>9</sup> Didymus devoted a work to the defense and exposition of Origen's "On the First Principles".

St. John Damascene<sup>10</sup> mentions two other works of Didymus “Ad PHIL-  
OSOPHUM” and “DE INCORPOREA”.

Some works preserved under the names of other Fathers, were written by him.<sup>11</sup>

Socrates says, “Those who may desire to form a just idea of the extensive erudition of Didymus, and the intense ardor of his mind, must pursue with attention his diversified and elaborate works . . . . In fact Didymus was regarded as the great ‘bulwark of the true faith’.”<sup>12</sup>

### References:

1. Rufinus H.E. 2:7.
2. Enist. 50:4, 84:2; Comm. in Osee proph. 1:1; Comm. in Enist. ad
3. Liber de Spir. Sanc., Praef. ad Paulin.
4. Rufinus: Apol. in Hier. 2:25.
5. Palladius: Laus. His. (translated by W.K.L. Clarke, N.Y. 1918) ch. 4.
6. See also Sozomen: H.E. 6:2; Theodoret: H.E. 3:24.
7. Socrates: H.E. 4:25.
8. Quasten vol 3, p. 91.
9. Socrates: H.E. 4:25.
10. Socra Parallela PG 96:248, 524.
11. See Quasten, vol 3, p. 89-90.
12. Op. Cit.

## **CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES**

### ***On the Sacrament of Myron (Chrismation)***

*By His Grace Anba Gregorios, bishop for Higher Theological Studies, Coptic Church. Cairo, 1965.*

Like other Orthodox churches, the Coptic church has kept the Apostolic Tradition of giving the Myron directly after Baptism (Mark 1:10, Acts 8:14-17 & 19:1-6). The sacrament has its name from the Greek and Coptic word *meron* which means anointment.

- *It is necessary for the baptized to be anointed also so that by the chrism he may be anointed of God and receive the grace of Christ. (St. Cyprian: Letters, 70)*
- *After coming out of the baptismal font, we were anointed with holy oil (Tertullian: Baptism, 7)*
- *. . . after you have come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given an Unction . . . and this is the Holy Spirit. (St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures, 21:1)*

#### ***Myron is the Sacrament of Confirmation of the Soul***

In Chrismation the faithful receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which confirms them in the life they receive in Baptism, and gives them power in their spiritual struggle.

- *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (2 Cor. 1:21,22)*
- *And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. (1 John 3:24)*
- *But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the Body, ye shall live. (Rom. 8:13)*
- *For as Christ after His Baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit went forth and vanquished the adversary, so you likewise, after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the whole armour of the Holy Spirit, are to stand against the power of the adversary and vanquish it*



saying, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."  
(Phil. 4:13) (St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures; 21:5)

### ***Myron is the Seal of God over the Soul***

It is a distinguishing internal sign by which the souls consecrated to God are known (Rev. 3:12; 7:3; 13:16; 14:1 & 22:4) and Satan cannot touch them (1 John 5:18; Rev. 9:4). In the parable of the prodigal son the best robe was a symbol of Baptism while the ring signified Chrismation (Luke 15:22).

- ... in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. (Ephes. 1:13)
- And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Ephes. 4:30)
- By the prayer of Peter and John, and the imposition of their hands upon the Samaritans, the Holy Spirit was invoked and was poured upon them. (Acts 8:14-17) This has been the practice in the Church ever since. Those who are baptized, through our prayers and imposition of hands, receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected with His seal. (St. Cyprian: Letters; 73,9)
- Baptism is followed by the spiritual sign. (St. Ambrose: The Sacraments; 3,2)

### ***Myron is the Sacrament of Consecration of the Soul***

In Chrismation, the soul is sanctified, consecrated, and dedicated for God, a state called in Scripture "*sanctification of the Spirit*" (2 Thes. 2:13, 1 Pet. 1:2). After this the soul should no longer live "*in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*" (1 Pet. 4:2). This is why altars, vessels and icons are anointed with the holy myron; they become sanctified and dedicated for the worship of God.

- Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. (1 Cor. 3:16)
- What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you ... therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19 & 20)
- The flesh is washed (in Baptism) so that the soul may be purified. The flesh is anointed (in Chrismation) so that the soul may be dedicated. (Tertullian: Resurrection; 8,2)
- This holy ointment is no more simple ointment, ... but it is Christ's gift of grace, and by the advent of the Holy Spirit is made fit to impart His Divine Nature. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and your other senses; and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, the soul is sanctified by the Holy and life-giving Spirit. (St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures; 21:3)

***Myron is the Sacrament that makes the Faithful Kings, Priests and Prophets***

Those who receive the sacrament become:

1. **Kings**, with power over their bodily desires through the “*Spirit of power*” (Is. 11:2)
2. **Priests**, presenting themselves and their bodies “*a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God*” (Rom. 12:1), and *offering sacrifices of prayer and praise* (Heb. 13:15) and *almsgiving* (Heb. 13:16; 2 Cor. 9:12,13) This is the general priesthood which should not be confused with the special priesthood (Holy Orders) of those chosen by God to shepherd His people.
3. **Prophets**, for they are given the “*Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel . . . the Spirit of knowledge*” (Is. 11:2)
  - . . . *they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)*
  - *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:5)*
  - *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:10)*  
(See also: Ex. 19:6, 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6)

***Work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Life.***

The Holy Spirit received in Chrismation works during the whole life of the Christian and is manifested in many aspects.

1. ***Spiritual Growth.***

If Baptism gives a new birth and purification from sin, Chrismation gives the power that sustains the new life, enabling the Christian to grow and reach perfection.

2. ***Reproval of Sin*** (John 16:8; Acts 2:37).

3. ***Spiritual Comfort and Joy.***

- *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace . . . (Gal. 5:22)*
- *Then had the churches rest . . . and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied (Acts 9:31)*

The Holy Spirit was called “*Comforter*” in John 14:16,26 & 15:26 & 16:7.

4. ***Intercession.***

The Holy Spirit enkindles the love of God in us and assists our prayers.

- *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. (Rom. 8:26)*  
(See also Rom. 8:15 & 27; Gal. 4:6)

### 5. ***Mental and Spiritual Enlightenment.***

This is a threefold gift that includes the past, present and future as described by our Lord,

- *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26)*
- *“... and he will show you things to come (John 16:13)*
- *“the same anointing teacheth you of all things . . . (I John 2:27)*  
*(See also Luke 12:12; I John 2:20,27; Rom. 8:14; Rev. 19:10; Joel 2:28)*

in the army of Christ, the camp of the saints. (Rev. 20:9)

- *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . (Acts 1:8)*

### 7. ***Other Charismata.***

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to the Church members according to their readiness and to the needs of the Church. They include *wisdom, knowledge, healing, miracles, prophecy* and *tongues* (I Cor. 12:4-13)

## **CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES**

### **THE DIDASCALIA** **Teachings of the Apostles**

*A critical edition prepared, introduced and commented upon by Dr. William  
Soliman Kelada, Cairo, 1979.*  
***History of the Didascalia***

Christian Tradition has been practiced by the Church since the time of the Apostles. Tradition was not a written document, but the continuation of pure hearts, where Christ dwelt, and which received, kept and delivered Him as an experience from generation to generation. Time came when these Apostolic teachings, as practised and experienced by the Church were put into writing. Thus appeared the various Apostolic canons, Apostolic constitutions and the Didascalia.

The Didascalia is considered an important part of the Tradition in the Coptic Church, possibly next to the Scripture in its importance. Its teachings are given a primary place before the laws of the Ecumenical Councils or any Church law. In spite of this, there has not been previously any historical, theological or canonical study of this book by any Coptic scholar.

The survival of the Didascalia or the Apostolic Constitutions in various languages of the early Church, including Greek, Coptic, Syriac and Latin is a proof of their Apostolic origin. The value of these teachings and constitutions is emphasized by the reference to them in ecumenical and local councils and in the writings of the Church Fathers and historians. However they gradually lost their importance in many churches. The Western churches completely lost track of them, till they were rediscovered suddenly in 1563 A.D. The first enthusiasm for the constitutions later gave way to waves of criticism. On the other hand, in the Byzantine East, there was no ignorance but a complete rejection of the Apostolic Constitutions, with the exception of the last book containing the 85 Apostolic Canons. The second Trullan council of 692 A.D. rejected them for what it called "their heretical interpolations." Dr. Kelada comments on the resolution of this council saying,

"It should have been natural for the council to discover the heretical interpolations and separate them from the original Apostolic teaching which should have been accepted, especially that the Apostolic canon No.

85, accepted by the council, ordered to respect it.<sup>1</sup> . . . This prejudice was probably the first of its kind in the history of treating doctrinal errors — to refuse texts admitted to be of Apostolic origin with no exact or evident reason. The council reached his decision without mentioning what texts he meant, and what errors they contained.”

Dr. Kelada attributes the rejection of the constitutions in the East, and the ignorance about them in the West to one common reason — lack of practice. There were periods of enthusiasm for them and periods when the interest for them faded, depending on mere theoretical study of the texts. He adds, “The Didascalia and the constitutions call for ecclesiastic practice that expresses the union of the Church as a body with Christ its head; moreover they teach about a high level of life for the Christian. . . . The conditions in the society and the Church were unable to accept this, and hence came the decision of rejection.”

In the Coptic Church, the Didascalia has always been practised. The author did not find in the present Arabic text any theological error or deviation. This has been also the view of Coptic scholars along the centuries.

Dr. Kelada aimed at “introducing the text of the Didascalia as a living book, closely related to the Christian faith and the Church practice.”

It took him more than ten years to study the text and introduce it as a living book. It is included in 480 pages in his book. Its relation to the Christian faith and the Church practice is the scope of the last 350 pages of the book.

### ***The Text***

The text published in the book is a “living text”, based on the Arabic manuscript of the Vatican library, “Borg Arabo 22 (KIV 24)” This manuscript has been translated in 1295 A.D. from a Coptic manuscript dated 927 A.D. Both the Coptic, as well as the original Greek texts have been lost. This leaves the Arabic text to be the mother text of the Didascalia which we have now. According to Baumstark, this Arabic text is wonderfully true to the Greek, so much so as to be of great importance for a critical edition of the Greek. Because the Didascalia is still used as a source for the Church law, the old text has to be accommodated to the modern Arabic language. So the author took the freedom to make any necessary change in word spelling, grammar or idiom, while still giving the original text of the manuscript in the margin.

In addition he did a critical study of the Vatican manuscript by comparing it to other translations word for word and including all the differences in the margins. The translations compared were mainly:

1. An Arabic translation of the Syriac Didascalia, known in Egypt since the fourteenth century and published in 1924 A.D. and 1940 A.D.
2. The Apostolic Constitutions; in its English translation (ANF Vol VII p. 385 ff.) The Arabic text corresponds to the first seven books of the Apostolic Constitutions.

3. The Ethiopic Didascalia, in its English translation (by J. M. Harden, SPCK, London, 1920).
4. The Syriac Didascalia, in its French translation (by F. Nau, Paris, 1912).

### ***CHRISTIAN FAITH***

The Didascalia is a teaching about the Church—its nature, type of life it offers, the nature of its governing body and how it works.

Before studying the contents and theology of the Didascalia, the author gave a 200 page summary of the Christian faith. The Church was born within both Jewish and Greek surroundings. Misunderstanding the nature of the new creation, it was natural that each group would try to draw it to its side. The early Church had to encounter the Jewish Christians on one side (Acts 15) and the Gnostics on the other (Acts 8, 2 Tim. 2:16-18). Both groups were dealt with at large by the Didascalia. Before any study of the Christian faith and nature of the Church as described in the New Testament and the Didascalia, one has to start by examining their backgrounds—the Old Testament and the Greek heritage that had its climax in the Gnostic syncretism.

#### ***Old Testament***

The Old Testament deals with the relationship between God and man.

##### ***1. Creation of man and his fall.***

Man was created as an image of God. His role was to govern the whole creation and offer it as a priest to its Creator. Sin was foreign to man and came to him in the form of the serpent. With sin man was separated from God, he lost the experience of the tree of life by searching after knowledge, and he lost his role as a priest of the whole creation. But although he deviated from his origin, yet man has never lost the fact that he is the image of God. The image which through sin has stopped to work, and has become silent and without effect can still be restored by its Creator.

##### ***2. The Old Covenant.***

The covenant is the very heart of the Old Testament theology and it is the best term to describe how God deals with man; He is always the God who saves His people. In the Old Testament salvation of man, his restoration to his original image, always passed in three parallel lines.

- a. From the many, through the few, into the One. The whole humanity was reduced in the flood to the family of Noah. Later only Abraham's family was chosen, which was later reduced to Isaac, then Jacob, Judah, and David from which the Messiah was to descend.
- b. The covenant started to effect man from outside, but finally had to work from the inside.
- c. The covenant was always directing man to the future. There was always a promise giving hope to mankind. The promised deliverer, the Messiah

was due to become the perfect Prophet (Dt. 18:18), the perfect King (Is. 9:1-7; 11:1ff, 55:3) and the perfect Priest and Sacrifice (Is. 52:13-53:12; 54:10).

### 3. *Breaking of the Covenant.*

The old covenant was constantly broken by Israel. This has been attributed to three main reasons. *The first* was the contact with the religions of Canaan, where the gods were considered gods of the land and not of the people. Even some of the Israelites carried pagan names related to the Cananite god Baal (1 Chronicles 9:34, 40; 14:7). *The second* was the growth of the external rites of religion while the spiritual values became

obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22, see also Is. 1:11-17) "For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6)

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. 6:6-8)

*The last factor* that led Israel to break its covenant was its betrayal of God as their King (Psalms 47, 93, 96, 97 and others). God has been called King of Jacob in Is. 41:21 and King of Israel in Is. 44:6. Israel chose to have its own human king. The prophets spoke about the sin of Israel in Gilgal, where their first king ruled (1 Sam 11: 14, 15; Hos. 9:15). The idea of a human king and a human kingdom was against the will of God (Hos. 8:4; 13:9-11).

The breakage of the covenant and the corruption of Israel led to its downfall and to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. It was in captivity that Israel was purified.

### 4. *The New Covenant.*

Within the tragedy, the prophets could foresee the coming of the Saviour. Daniel saw him as the Son of Man in heaven (Daniel 7:13), as well as the Son of God dwelling with men (Danial 3:25). Isaiah saw him as the Servant of God who suffers and dies for his people (Is. 42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12). Jeremiah spoke plainly about the new covenant, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I

made with their fathers . . . which my covenant they brake . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts . . . for they shall all know me . . . ” (Jer. 31:31-34) But this new salvation is not only for Israel; it is shared by all nations (Is. 42:1; 11:10; 49:6; 1:45; 55:4; Ps. 72:17; Is. 2:2-4; 45:20-25; 51:4-6)

### ***Greek Heritage and the Gnostic Syncretism***

The genius of the Greek was their philosophical mind with which they tried to explain the universe. As their religions gave them gods with human passions, evil and weakness, they tried to find their guide in their various philosophies. But there was a great need for a new religion, a new synthesis, a new syncretism between the Greek thought, eastern religions, and Judaism or what we call the gnostic movement. When Christianity appeared, the Gnostics tried to include it in their belief. Gnostics believed that the material world was not created by God, but by an evil power, and that man who was originally spiritual was conquered by this evil power and fell to the material world; salvation is through knowledge (gnosis). Gnostics could never believe that God appeared in the flesh; the body of Christ could not be a real body.

### ***Christianity***

At the fulfillment of time Christ came. He was the awaited Messiah, King of the Jews, but His kingdom was not of this world. “Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, ‘Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven’” (Mark 14:61, 62). Here our Lord acknowledged that he was the Christ (King) and the heavenly Son of Man seen by Daniel, as well as His divinity (I am). When the Logos became flesh, He gave human beings the power to become partakers of the divine nature, to become sons of God.

But Christ was not the Messiah, according to the Jewish understanding of an earthly king. He was also the Servant of the Lord, the Lamb of God, who as a Priest and Sacrifice carried our sins on the cross. When He conquered death and ascended to heaven, humanity was represented in Him. The Son of Man and all the people of God were given power and glory as Daniel had seen (Daniel 7:13, 14, 18, 22 and 27).

The Church is the people of God. It was born on the day of Pentecost and was given various titles in the New Testament, each having a significant meaning: New Creation, New Jerusalem, Holy City, Bride of the Lamb, Bride of Christ, Body of Christ. New members are incorporated into this Body through Baptism. This becomes apparent in the Didascalia when it says that at Baptism, the heavenly Father declares to the baptized the same words used for Christ, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:7, Acts 13:33).



Dr. Kelada reminds us that the white clothes mentioned throughout the book of Revelation (Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13, 14; 19:8, 14) represent the white baptismal robes, which are also the same white clothes of the priests and deacons during the Eucharistic celebration. If every individual becomes a member of Christ by being baptized into His One Body (I Cor. 12:13, Ephes. 4:3-5, Gal. 3:27), all faithful live the unity of the Body in the Eucharist, in which they offer their bodies with the Sacrifice of Christ (I Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23-26; Rom. 12:1; 6:13, 16, 19; Heb. 13:15). In the Eucharist, Christ comes in the midst of His Church (Mat. 18:19, 20). Dr. Kelada stresses this fact in various places:

“The principal meeting which is considered in His name is the gathering for the Eucharist. In it He comes in mystery, before His second coming which will appear to all . . .

“ . . . When the faithful meet in the Lord’s day for offering the Eucharist, the Father receives it from the hand of His Son who is the Sacrifice and the Priest . . .

“ . . . Sunday is the new day, the Lord’s day, the eighth day—the first day in the new age, the time of the Messiah . . .

“ . . . Eucharist is the Sacrament of the Church. It is the coming of the resurrected and glorified Christ to be present in the midst of His own . . .

“ . . . In the moment of the Eucharist, the faithful experience at the same time the presence of their Lord and their union with Him in one Body.”

The author observed a double meaning in the old Aramaic prayer, “Maranatha” (I Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20), which was incorporated in the Eucharistic Prayer given in the Didascalia, “Gather us all in Thine kingdom which Thou hast prepared, till the coming of the Lord. Thy kingdom come” (36:40). He comments,

“The Church does not ask the Lord only to advance His second coming (2 Peter 3:12), but also to come in her midst now. Thus, ‘Maranatha’ has the double meaning, ‘Come Lord at the end of times’, and ‘come now in our gathering to break the bread.’”

### ***OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE DIDASCALIA***

Dr. Kelada started by analysing the Didascalia in relation to the period in which it was written; or in other words the teaching it contained as a reaction to both Jewish Christianity and Gnosticism—the two dangers which threatened the early Church. He gave full reference from both the New Testament and the Didascalia to prove that the Old Testament is only understood through the New. On the other hand, using both references he explained how the early Church stood against the important gnostic teachings, mainly dualism and disbelief in Christ’s incarnation. He concluded this part saying,

“Understanding the Trinity does not come through abstract knowledge, as the Gnostics do, but by practice. Man should be like God; and God is love, and he should continue the work of God concerning his brothers. This is the real challenge which Christianity gives towards these sects, both in the books of the New Testament and in the Didascalia. The Church is considered the living incarnation of the Love principle. This is why the teaching of the Didascalia about the Church and the importance of the shepherding role of the bishop for her sons in the various aspects of their life, is the real stand against both the Jewish and the Gnostic movements.”

But the Didascalia is not only a reaction against movements alien to Christianity. It contains the basic teachings which formed the nucleus for any later Church law. These teachings Dr. Kelada classified under three topics: Man, Society and the Church.

1. *Man*

Man has been restored to his original position which he was created in. The Didascalia respected humanity, blessed marriage, and did not prevent Christians from tasting the beauty of art, wisdom or history. A human being gets his restoration by becoming a member of Christ, through Baptism, through which he also gets the power of final resurrection.

2. *Society*

The Didascalia does not put legislations for government administration. Christian power is based on love, service, and good life which is light, salt and leaven. In this sense the Didascalia teaches about the unity of all humanity, and advises the Christians to live in the world but to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's. It gives regulations about work, education, rest, worship and care of the needy.

3. *Church*

The Didascalia is primarily a Church directory. It describes the Church, the new people of God. It gives the method, prayers and theology of Baptism. It teaches about Church meetings especially the Eucharist, giving a full Eucharistic Prayer. In the Church the faithful share in the life of the Holy Trinity starting by Baptism (Matt. 28:20) and being manifested daily in the use of the sign of the cross. The head of the Church is Christ. The bishop governs the Church with the authority of God which is love. The Didascalia elaborates on the duties, character and service of the bishop. It describes the degrees of priesthood, but does not ignore the function of the laity who still have a direct relation to Christ, as members of the body to its head. They function during the Eucharist and in the election of all clergy.

From all these principles, Dr. Kelada came in the last pages of his work to the definition of the Church law as “the combination of rules which guard the

unity of the Church as a body whose head is Christ, and on this basis regulates the relation between its members, and describes its role in the world". The Didascalia gives the basis of these rules and not the details which may change according to time, place and changing life conditions. As the seed of all Church laws, it has become the reference and measure for any canon in the Church.

*Footnote*

1. This canon says, "The commandments of the Apostles for you Bishops, have been transcribed by me, Clement, in eight books" (which are the eight books of the Apostolic Constitutions).

## BOOK REVIEWS

### ***The Nicene Creed Illuminated by Modern Thought***

*By Geddes MacGregor. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980. Pp. 149. \$7.95.*

The Nicene Creed is every Divine Liturgy and in the prayers of the hours. It has been accepted as a formulation of the Apostolic faith since it was put by the councils of Nicaea and Constantinople sixteen centuries ago. Geddes MacGregor (who is Emeritus Distinguished Professor at the University of Southern California) provides us in this book with a modern commentary on the Creed. Without detracting from the Church Tradition, he demonstrates how modern science and contemporary thought can illuminate the words of the Creed for believers today. Following it phrase by phrase, he discusses the main Christian doctrines. Among its fifteen chapters, the book includes chapters on faith, loving fatherhood of God, Incarnation, Virgin Birth, Resurrection, Ascension, Holy Spirit, Church, Baptism and Eternal Life.

The author says, "By seeing beyond the words of the Creed, we do not necessarily water it down. We may indeed be enriching it, and that is what I hope to do. If we approach it with loving hearts and open minds, we shall find more in the Creed when we have finished than do those who thoughtlessly accept it." We can only mention some areas where he successfully manages to blend together the writings of the Church Fathers with those of modern thinkers, in order to give the reader themes for further meditation that can enrich his life.

The Nicene Creed starts by declaring one's belief in one God. But faith is more than belief, it is trust in Him, and awareness of His care and His guidance. Modern science enhances our appreciation of God's creative act. The universe reveals to us, however obliquely, the divine Being, or in the words of the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God."

Twentieth-century scientific thought helps to remove certain obstacles to the apprehension of the doctrine of Incarnation, obstacles which were placed in the Middle Ages by scholastic theologians who accepted the dualism of Aristotle. In contemporary thought, the "spiritual" and the "carnal" are not to be thought of as two worlds, but as two dimensions. This is much closer to

the writings of the early Church, and makes the words of St. John, “born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God”, easier to understand and to appreciate.

Throughout the book, MacGregor finds many occasions to emphasize the traditional beliefs of the Church. Virgin Mary has been called Theotokos, the God-bearer, by the Church “for she had borne the Child who was God Himself. No one who believed in the divinity of Christ could deny Mary this beautiful title.” As the mother of our Lord, she mystically represents the Church, the mother of all Christians. “He cannot have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother” are words of the third century Father, St. Cyprian, which have been echoed by many, including Calvin in the sixteenth century. In the chapter dealing with the Church, the author stresses its mystical connection with the Eucharist—both being the Body of Christ. In every Eucharist, the whole Church is present—the faithful physically present are joined with the heavenly host, the angels, the archangels, and, not the least, our own departed friends. When the Creed describes the Church as Apostolic it affirms on the one hand that its faith and practice conforms to the faith and practice of the Church in Apostolic times, and on the other hand that it has a continuity of episcopate from the earliest times down to the present.

In the chapter on “One Baptism” we are reminded of the words of St. Ambrose, “. . . any grace in the water . . . is not from the nature of the water, but from the presence of the Holy Spirit.” Baptism has been believed from early times to bring about forgiveness of sins; hence the reference to this in the Creed. It has been widely held in the history of the Church to be completely indispensable for salvation. The witness of the earliest Fathers is unanimous that infant Baptism was normal practice. Because in Baptism a person is admitted into the Church which is the Body of Christ, the author concludes that in churches that deny infant Baptism, the concept of mystical incorporation into the Body of Christ in infancy is absent.

For an Orthodox Christian the book has a few drawbacks; one that cannot be passed over is its failure to emphasize the biblical doctrine of the Virgin birth of Christ. Although we do not endorse its neutral position on this, still we highly recommend the book for the Christian youth and for leaders of youth groups who find difficulty in attracting the youth to the Church when they deliver to them the Tradition in the archaic language used by many preachers.

## *The Harp of the Spirit*

*Introduction and Translation by Sebastian Brock. London: Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1975. Pp. 72.*

This small book opens for the modern English-speaking reader the door to an almost untouched treasure house. St. Ephraem the Syrian, the fourth century Church Father who was so respected by his own contemporaries to the degree of calling him "the Harp of the Holy Spirit" and who has a lot of extant writings of deep theological and spiritual significance, and has been declared a doctor in the Roman Catholic Church since 1920, is rarely discussed outside the Eastern churches which still use his homilies and hymns in their liturgies.

Born at Nisibis in Mesopotamia about the year 306 A.D., he became a disciple of its famous bishop St. James at an early age, and probably accompanied him to the Council of Nicaea in 325. Except for the last ten years of his life, he lived in Nisibis as a hermit. When that city was handed over to the Persians in 363, he left it together with many of the Christians to the town of Edessa (now Urfa, in southeast Turkey). Ephraem lived in a cave in a rocky height outside the city. It was said that he left Edessa for a long visit to the desert of Scete in Egypt where he met St. Bishoi, and to Caeseria to see St. Basil. However, his years at Edessa were spent in service. Many heresies flourished there; the gnostic Bardesanes and strong followers of Mani had propagated their doctrines in popular poetic form. Ephraem took the task of composing orthodox hymns which were sung in church by women's choir. These quickly replaced the gnostic hymns and were translated to Greek and possibly other languages during his life. Soon the whole East was singing the praises of St. Ephraem. In the last year of his life, he organized a relief service for the sick and the poor who suffered during a famine.

St. Ephraem led a life of severe ascetic discipline. St. Gregory of Nyssa mentioned that his food was mainly bread and legumes and he was dressed in rags. His humility made him flee from ordination, he remained a deacon till he died. At his death he left a testament asking his friends not to treat his body with honor or bury him in the church, but with strangers as he was a stranger. In this, his last poem, he stressed,

"Instead of perfumes and spices, be mindful of me in your intercessions.

"Give me, as provision for my journey, your prayers, your psalms and your sacrifices . . .

"For the dead truly derive succour from the sacrifices offered by the living."

A few decades after his death Sozomen described him as "the greatest ornament of the Catholic Church", and St. Jerome said, "He became so

distinguished that his writings are repeated publicly in some churches, after the reading of the Scriptures.”

St. Ephraem was a prolific writer—both in prose and in poetry. He wrote in prose commentaries of nearly all the books of the Bible and refutations of various heresies. His poetry fell into two categories: hymns (*madrashé*) intended for singing; and verse homilies (*memre*) which were probably recited.

The book gives us a taste of St. Ephraem. The introduction deals with his life and discusses the more important themes dear to him: Creation and Scriptures as two witnesses for Christ, Christ’s descent into Sheol, and themes about Virgin Mary. St. Ephraem used typological exegesis. As an example, in John 19:34, the pierced side of Christ has its type in the side of Adam from which Eve came, while the blood and water point forwards to Baptism and Eucharist.

There are twelve poems translated, each preceded by a brief introduction. The introductions, the prose rendering of the verses and the many biblical references make the reading of the poems a joyful spiritual exercise.

The main themes discussed in these poems are:

1. ***Incarnation*** (Poems 3, 4 and 6)

The Passover lamb was a symbol of Christ, the true Lamb. In the new exodus, Christ led the gentiles from error and the dead from Sheol and He conquered Satan (as Pharaoh was conquered in the old exodus).

“Like a seed of wheat He fell again to Sheol, to spring up as a whole sheaf (Lev. 23:11), as the new Bread. (John 6:36)”

2. ***Scriptures*** (2)

In the second poem which is a hymn on Paradise, St. Ephraem compares the Scriptures to the rock that gave the Israelites water in the desert. He gives a vivid description of how the Scriptures can be both a gate and a bridge to the paradise of contemplation.

“I read the opening of this book  
and was full of joy,  
for its verses and lines  
spread out their arms to welcome me;  
. . . and when I reached that line  
where the story  
of Paradise is written, it lifted me up  
and transported me,  
from the bosom of the book  
to the very bosom of Paradise.”

3. ***Descent of Christ into Sheol*** (7)

The seventh hymn in this series was chosen from a number of hymns in which the saint describes the theme in dialogue form—Satan, Sin and Death

are speaking. Here, it is Death who speaks, addressing the conquering Christ, and finally it submits to His power and delivers to Him its great hostage—Adam,

“and when I hear your trumpet call,  
with my own hands will I bring forth the dead at your coming”

#### 4. **Baptism** (8)

The eighth hymn is one of four hymns “On Oil and Olive” where the saint dwells on the rich theme of oil as a type of Christ. Many Old Testament symbols of Baptism are mentioned: water of creation, the flood, the oil used ~~mentioned the spiritual effects of baptism, restoration of Adam’s image,~~ forgiveness of sins and new birth.

It is very interesting that St. Ephraem emphasizes here, as well as in other hymns, the rite of pre-baptismal anointing which is still a part of the baptismal rites.

#### 5. **Eucharist** (1 & 9)

Both hymns discuss the wedding feast of Cana. However, the saint is not as interested in the event or the miracle, as he is in the wedding feast of Christ and the Church, which is the Holy Eucharist.

#### 6. **Virgin Mary** (5, 11 & 12)

The patristic scholar O. Bardenhewer said about St. Ephraem, “His harp resounds to the praises of Mary more frequently than that of any other poet or orator of Christian antiquity. He loves to sing of her stainless virginity, her truly divine maternity, and her freedom from sin.”

Many biblical symbols of Mary are mentioned in these poems: the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:10-16), the dove (Canticles 6:9), the palace (Proverbs 9:1), the new heaven (Isaiah 65:17), Ezekiel’s chariot (Ezekiel 1), spring (Joel 3:18) and the stem of the cluster of grapes (Isaiah 5:1 & 65:8; Numbers 13:23). Although these are common themes in the Daily Office of the Church and in its Marian hymns, yet it is very significant to hear them from the mouth of a fourth century Father. Also in the 11th poem in the book, we hear the Virgin addressing the prophet Isaiah,

“Come Isaiah, and look on me; let us rejoice together,  
for I have given birth, with my virginity still sealed.”

The last verse is echoed in the Prayer of Fraction sung in the Divine Liturgy of the Coptic Church during Advent and Christmas.

This is the type of patristic study we need today. The scholarly introduction and notes, and the modern translation offer the reader a rich meal, but a meal which still leaves him hungry for more.



### ***St. Shenouda the Archimandrite***

*By H. N. Takla. Los Angeles, California: St. Shenouda Coptic Society (c/o St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, 1600 S. Robertson Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90035), 1981. Pp. 108. \$3.00*

This is a scholarly contribution to the study of one of the Coptic Church Fathers who is little known in the West. St. Shenouda (Shenute) of Atri (350-466 A.D.) is considered one of the founders of Coptic Monasticism. Starting as a monk in the Red Monastery, near Akhmim in Upper Egypt, he advanced quickly both spiritually and scholastically till he became its abbot or Archimandrite (i.e., chief of anchorites). In spite of his strict discipline, monasteries grew under his guidance till he had 2200 monks in the double Red and White monasteries as well as 1800 nuns. His genius appeared also in other fields. In 431, he accompanied St. Cyril the Great to the Council of Ephesus, where he acted an important part. He opened the door of his main church to the people of neighboring areas in order to participate in the liturgy and hear the sermons which he delivered by himself. He defended the poor and the oppressed and finally became the leader of the populace in their struggle against the foreign Byzantine rule. He left extensive writings in Coptic which deal mainly with moral issues.

The main article in this book has the title "The Ecclesiastical Position of St. Shenouda in the Coptic Church". Reviewing his biography in the Synaxarion, his homilies and the hymns that honor him in the liturgy, and noticing the few number of churches bearing his name, the author came to the unfortunate conclusion that the Church, as an institution, bears the burden of treating its great saint in a manner inferior to his contributions to the Coptic Church. (Page 20). He also stated that "the founder of Coptic Christianity" is seldom remembered in the names of churches, while his one time great monastery is simply dying of old age with the Church seemingly reluctant to take a step towards its revival. (Page 27). He attributed this to the pacifist policy of the Church, her endorsement of the hermitic type of monasticism practised in Scete rather than the cenobitism practiced by St. Shenute, and finally the fact that he was an Upper Egyptian while "the Coptic Church was always guided by Lower Egyptian clergymen".

In this review we are not authorized to give the response of the Church to such harsh and unhistorical statements. But it does not appear to us that the saint is poorly emphasized in the liturgy. Great Fathers like St. Macarius, St. Pachomius, St. Athanasius and St. Cyril did not have a better luck. The inclusion of nine homilies of St. Shenouda (out of a total of fifteen) in the Paschal week is a fact mentioned by the author and is enough to contradict his view. The Coptic Church has too many great saints in its calendar and it is

only possible to give each a limited space in its liturgy. Three of its popes have been named after St. Shenouda. It addresses him in the liturgy with the titles of "the great prophet", "the wonder of the Angels", "the Apostle", "the righteous", and "the lamp of Monasticism". How can it honor him more?

The Church cannot be responsible for the deterioration of the White Monastery; hundreds of ancient monasteries had the same fate due to lack of piety, repeated persecutions and material poverty. With a few exceptions, monasteries have always been built and revived by the monks themselves, sometimes assisted by lay people. During the last three decades the Church has been taking an active role in rebuilding the old monasteries and it was natural to start with the inhabited ones.

We also have a word of reserve about calling St. Shenouda "the founder of Coptic Christianity" or that he was "instrumental in the formation of the National Church of Egypt". The author here repeats misleading statements by foreign authors in their trial to convey the idea that the Coptic Church is a national church that started in the fifth century as a deviation from the Catholic Church. Nothing can be more unhistorical. The Coptic Church was established by St. Mark the Apostle in the first century. The Bible was translated to the Coptic language in the second century.

The second part of the book is a collection of Coptic texts of hymns and doxologies for the saint and some of his homilies with their English translation. This part may be of value to scholars of the Coptic language. The inclusion of some hymns which are no more used in worship is an attempt to revive their use.

The book ends by a 19-page Shenoudian bibliography divided into sections for the history of the saint, his literary work, the hymns in his honor, his monasteries, the main library, and articles about his disciple, St. Visa (Wissa).

The effort done by the author in producing this book more than compensates for its shortcomings. His promise of future volumes, studies in the life of St. Shenouda, and his sermons, is significant in showing that the sons of the Coptic Church have started to specialize in the study of its Fathers, and that the Church has not ignored St. Shenouda.

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