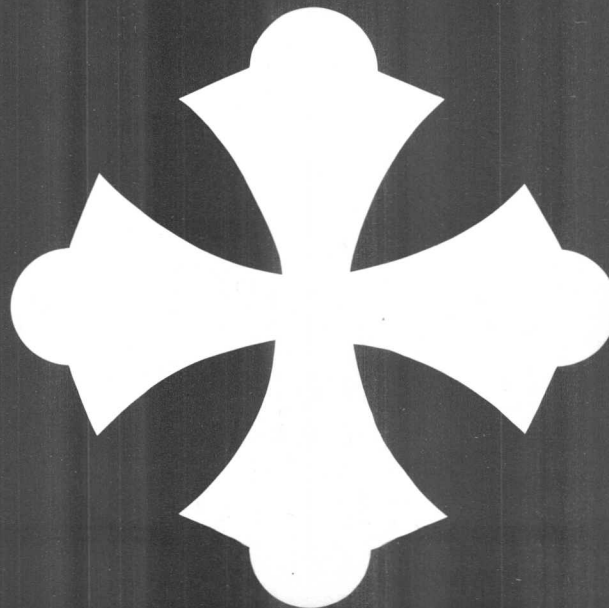


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 2, Number 4 Winter 1981

- *The Coptic Church Under Persecution*
- *Christmas in the Writings of the Fathers*
- *Salvation in the Orthodox Concept*



Society of Coptic Church Studies

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The Coptic Church is approaching Christmas this year while she is bearing her cross. Still Christmas is the time to praise and to glorify the Lord and to rejoice despite tribulations. *Christmas Day in the Writings of the Church Fathers* may make a good meditation for Christmas. In '*Christ in the Old Testament*', *Father Matta El-Meskeen* discusses the typology of the Old Testament, with the kingdom, priesthood and prophecy of Israel, all pointing to the coming of Christ. The article is translated from the book 'Christ in the Two Testaments' published by the Monastery of St. Macarius at Scete in 1979.

In this issue there are two articles about Coptic Art. The article on the *Coptic Icons*, by *Father Tadros Malaty*, treats the subject of Coptic Art in general, and Icons in particular. We thank *Professor Ragheb Moftah* for his article '*The Music of the Coptic Church*'. Professor Moftah is the Director of the section for Coptic Music at the Institute of Coptic Studies in Cairo. Coptic chants have been transmitted from mouth to mouth for twenty centuries, only to be recorded in this century thanks to Professor Moftah who spared no effort, time or money till he fulfilled this one aim of his life.

Christians have always confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The doctrine of Salvation is the theme of two articles. In *Currents of Coptic Church Studies* we review the Arabic book of *His Holiness Pope Shenouda III*, '*Salvation in the Orthodox Concept*.' '*The Dynamics of Salvation*' which appears in the Book Reviews section treats the same subject as taught by the Church Fathers. The conclusion one reaches from both books, different as they are, is that the teaching of the Orthodox Church about salvation has always been biblical.

Editor

The Coptic Church Under a New Persecution

On September 2, 1981 the late President of Egypt issued several decrees that aimed at crippling the Coptic Church, humiliating its hierarchy, silencing its voice of truth, and creating a puppet leadership under his direct control and through which he could interfere in the Church affairs, even in its sermons and in Sunday School curricula, not only in Egypt but also overseas. The most drastic of his decrees was the deposing of Pope Shenouda III and his exile to a desert monastery in Wadi-el-Natroun, a measure unheard of in the recent history of the Coptic Church. With this he brought to a standstill all the activities of the Pope including his ecumenical activities, his weekly Cathedral homilies which were attended by thousands of his congregation, his leadership and supervision of the Church and his writings and publishing activities. The Pope has since then been put under solitary confinement, even his whereabouts and his condition at present are unknown.

Other measures taken against the Church included the arrest of eight bishops, twelve priests and a number of Sunday School teachers and other Coptic leaders; the closure of the only two weekly Christian newspapers one of which has the Pope as its editor; and the dissolution of three Coptic societies that worked in public service among the Christians in Cairo and in Alexandria.

All the Coptic churches in the U.S.A. announced that they were “distressed and outraged by the actions of the Egyptian government especially by the exile of the Pope and repudiated the replacement of His Holiness with any committee to govern the Church” and promised that they “will not recognize any authority but His Holiness.”

Bishop Wissa and Father Tadros Malaty

In this persecution *Coptic Church Review* has received the greatest honor a Christian journal can have. Two members of its editorial board are now suffering for their faith in the prisons of Egypt. The editor who has known them personally and worked with them for many years feels that it is his duty toward them, toward the readers and toward the whole world to write a few lines about these two angelic personalities.

Bishop Wissa was raised in Cairo in a pious family. Since his early childhood he manifested a sincere love for the Church and was very regular in

attending its meetings and liturgies. He became very active in the service of Sunday Schools during his high school and college periods. The pressure of study would not prevent him from sharing in the liturgy of the Holy Week which he used to attend in the monasteries. During college he was a frequent visitor to the monastery of Our Lady Al-Syrian in Scete, and the monks considered him one of them. From this monastery he had his spiritual director, Father Antonious—now Pope Shenouda III. After graduating from college, the young disciple made his final vows and became a monk in the neighboring Monastery of St. Bishoi. In 1975 he was called to be the Bishop of Balyana.

Under Bishop Wissa, Balyana became the center of spiritual activity in all Upper Egypt. He served by himself frequently in his churches and aimed at entering every house in the diocese. Balyana became the meeting place for a yearly conference for Sunday School teachers in Upper Egypt. He established a new seminary and published several books as well as a monthly letter to his congregation. In the last months the letter showed clearly the troubles that were building against the Church. There were “persecutions and attacks by the Adversary”. New constructions and improvements in buildings affiliated with the Church were stopped. The last words that reached us in his monthly letter were, “Pray that the name of our God be glorified and that He may deliver us from the mouth of the lion.”

Father Tadros Malaty was the disciple of Father Bishoi Kamel (see Coptic Church Review, Vol. 2, No. 1) and in 1961 became his fellow priest in the Church of St. George at Sporting, Alexandria. But his service was not bound by this city or even all of Egypt because he was chosen several times to serve overseas. For this he travelled much, in Europe, America and Australia, and started a number of new churches. He knew no rest in his service in spite of his frail body, worn by prolonged fasts. Recordings of the sermons he delivered in the United States are still treasured by many; they express a profound spirituality and a complete awareness and sympathy with the problems of modern man. In his twenty years of priesthood he wrote many books and translated a lot of patristic writings to Arabic. He contributed to Coptic Church Review since its first issue. The last article he has sent to us appears in this issue of the Journal.

Editor

Christmas Day In the Writings of the Church Fathers.

Christmas Day was for the Fathers the time when the Church contemplated the appearance of our Lord in the flesh in Bethlehem. Consequently many of their homilies for the feast discussed the theology of Incarnation, shared in the glorification with the Angels and Shepherds in Bethlehem, or described the joy of the Church in celebrating the event.

Incarnation

The aim of our Lord's Incarnation is summarized in the words of St. Athanasius, "The Word was made man in order that we might be made divine." The Church gives this a liturgical expression in its Advent songs sayings, "He took what is our (i.e. humanity), and gave us what is His (i.e. divinity)."

The Fathers never thought of the Nativity of our Lord as a separate event independent of the Cross and the Resurrection. So Christmas has been celebrated as a redemptive festival, because it brings us to the Paschal mystery—the exodus of men through Christ into the life of God. St. James of Serugh worships in the Christ of Bethlehem, the Sacrifice and the Priest,

"I approach and give the offering of my words, worshipping the Priest Who is coming to be the Victim instead of the sinners. Wisely I throw my mite on the table for the Shepherd who came down to become a Lamb among His sheep."

He rejoices with the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets for the coming of their Saviour,

"In this Day Adam rejoices, for he has obtained through Your Birth the divinity for which he asked. In this Day Eve is more happy than Adam, for from her has risen a child Who came to change her pains and labors. In this Day Paradise and its trees are pleased, for through You, the expelled heir is restored back to Eden, his home. In this Day the choruses of prophets rejoice for their hidden sayings have been revealed by Your birth. In this Day David Your father sings with the harp and strings to announce Your birth. In this Day Isaiah feels in his tomb the footsteps of Emmanuel as he prophesied."

St. Severus of Antioch wonders at the self-emptying of Christ in His Incarnation,

“He was brought down from his proper glory, and came to the humiliation. In this He indeed emptied Himself, and became possible to reach. In an unprecedented way and in a glorious method He entered our world through a divine and a royal door, the door of virginity. He was incarnated by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary.”

St Ephraem the Syrian finds in the Nativity a reason to glorify the Holy Virgin,

“The bosom of Mary amazes me because it sufficed for Thee, Lord, and embraced Thee. All creation was too small to conceal Thy majesty; ~~was the bosom of the earth, great enough for Thee was the bosom of~~ Mary.”

But the same theme is used by St. James of Serugh to contemplate at one and the same time the immanence and the transcendence of Christ,

“Where can I fetch you O Son, Who is both immanent and unapproachable? Are You on the chariot¹ or with Mary? with the Father or with Joseph? In the land of Judea or in the bosom of Your Father? . . . Does man find You carried on wings of fire and feathers¹ or magnified in the bosom of the Virgin Mother? . . . Is Your glory amidst the host of heavenly light or is it wrapped up in the manger like the poor? Are You carried on the speaking chariot, or on the hands of the Daughter of David exalted?”

St. John Chrysostom comments upon the genealogy of Christ and finds in His human birth a cause for our birth of the Spirit in Baptism,

“He suffered a slave to be father to Him that He might make the Lord Father to you a slave. . . . When you are told that the Son of God is Son of David and of Abraham, doubt not anymore that you too, the son of Adam, shall be son of God. For not at random nor in vain did He abase Himself so greatly, only He wanted to exalt us. Thus He was born after the flesh, in order that you may be born after the Spirit. He was born of a woman in order that you may cease to be the son of a woman. Wherefore the birth was twofold, both made like unto us, and also surpassing ours. For to be born of a woman indeed was our lot, but to be born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of man, but of the Holy Spirit, was to proclaim beforehand the birth surpassing us, the birth to come, which He was about to give us freely of the Spirit.”

At Bethlehem

St. Gregory of Nazianzus meditates on the events of Bethlehem,

“What a multitude of high festivals there are in each of the mysteries of Christ; all of them have one completion—my perfection and return to the first condition of Adam. . . . Accept His Conception, and leap before Him; if not like John from the womb (Luke 1:41), yet like David, because of the resting of the Ark (2 Sam. 6:14). Revere the enrolment on account of which you were written in heaven, and adore the Birth by which you were loosed from the chains of your birth (Ps.51:5), and honor little Bethlehem, which has led you back to Paradise: and worship the manger through which you, being without sense, were fed by the Word. Know as Isaiah bids you your Owner like the ox, and like the ass your Master’s crib (Is. 1:3). . . . run with the Star, and bear your gifts with the Magi, gold and frankincense and myrrh (Matt. 2), as to a King, and to God, and to One Who is dead for you. With Shepherds glorify Him (Luke 2:14,15); with Angels join in chorus; with Archangels sing hymns.”

This mixed chorus of Angels and men glorified the one Mediator as St. James of Serugh tells us,

“Angels and men crowded in front of the Newborn. The Angels and the shepherds mixed together to offer glorification. . . . Heaven and earth intermingled in praise of the One Mediator who made peace with His birth.”

The chorus of Angels and men was also described by St. Ephraem,

“For this is the night that joined the watchers on high with the vigil-keepers. The watchers came to make watches in the midst of creation. Lo! the vigil-keepers are made comrades of the watchers: the singers of praise are made companions of the Seraphs. Blessed is he who becomes the harp of Thy praise, and Thy grace becomes his reward.”

St. James of Serugh dwells on the same theme,

“They transformed the Christmas Night into day, for their light was brighter than the sun. . . . The earth trembled from the glory that came out of their mouths. The place was shaken by the rejoicing of their tongues—worthy praise, in beautiful voices, from a great mouth; wonderful singing in a tune that gives blessing to the soul. Creatures of light sing for the Light that rose amidst the darkness.”

St. Ephraem follows the shepherds to the manger,

“Blessed be that Babe in whom Eve and Adam were restored to youth! The shepherds also came laden with the best gifts of their flock. . . . They presented a suckling lamb to the Paschal Lamb, a first-born to the Firstborn, a sacrifice to the Sacrifice, a lamb of time to the Lamb of Truth.”

Angels and Shepherds have blessed the Baby Christ. But St. Ephraem finds in the festival a cause to bless the Church,

“Blessed are you, O Church, in Micah who cried out, “A Shepherd shall come forth from Ephrata,” for He came to Bethlehem to take from thence the rod of Jesse and to rule the nations. Blessed are your lambs that are sealed with His seal², and your sheep that are kept by His sword³. You are, O Church, the abiding Bethlehem⁴, for in you is the Bread of Life.⁵”

The Church on Christmas Day

St. Gregory of Nazianzus gives the theological basis for celebrating Christmas,

“This is our present Festival; it is this we are celebrating today, the coming of God to man, that we may go forth (Ephes. 4:22, 24) or rather (for this is the more proper expression) that we may go back to God—that putting off the old man so we may put on the New; and that as we have died in Adam, so we may live in Christ (1 Cor. 15:22), being born with Christ and crucified with Him and buried with Him and rising with Him (Col. 2:11)”

He then proceeds to describe how to celebrate the feast,

“Let us keep the feast, not after the manner of a heathen festival, but after a godly sort; not after the way of the world, but in a fashion above the world; not as of creation, but of re-creation. . . . Let us not adorn our porches, nor arrange dances, nor decorate the streets; let us not feast the eye, nor enchant the ear with music, nor enervate the nostrils with perfume, nor prostitute the taste, nor indulge the touch—those roads that are so prone to evil and entrances for sin. . . . The object of our adoration is the Word, and if we must have luxury, let us seek it in the word and in the Divine Law.”

The Church celebrates the feast by praising Christ in her liturgy. St. Ephraem compares her to the Angels (the Watchers), and compares the incense used in worship to the breath of the Angels,

“Blessed are you, O Church, for in you is the sound of the great feast—the festival of the King! . . . Blessed are you, O Church, that in

your festivals the Watchers rejoice amid your festivity. For one night the Watchers gave praise on the earth which withheld and refused praise. Blessed are your voices that have sown and reaped, and in heaven stored up in garners. Your mouth is a censer, and your voices as perfumes breathing vapor in your festivals.”

St. James of Serugh finds in the feast an occasion for the Church to praise Christ through meditation upon his work in redemption,

“This feast is more glorious than all days, and more beautiful than all feasts. Arise O Church with all your beautiful songs and offer for the Son the variety of tunes in His birthday. He expelled Zion which refused Him, and called that which had been refused and left aside in order she may enter. . . . In this Day, the Shepherd found the lost sheep and carried it on His shoulder to Paradise. . . . In this Day the Fighter came to the captives; He chained the captor and restored what was His. In this Day the Physician came for the stricken; He bandaged, healed and gave the wages of the healers. . . . In this month in which there is no fruit, the Fruit of Life has been sent to feed us on Himself. . . . In this month, when all the poor are lacking, the Rich One came and dispersed His treasures upon the beggars. . . . In this month when all the branches are empty, the Virgin gave a Cluster of Grapes out of her bosom. In this month when the trees shed their leaves, the leaves of Adam⁶ were replaced by the dress of light⁷.”

Finally St. James of Serugh finds in celebrating Christmas a reminder of the Eternal Banquet,

“In this Feast I have sung for the glory of Your birth; in Your great Day may I look at the mercy of Your divinity. Today, I have offered You a little praise; in Your great morning make me worthy to sing a lot. In this Feast I have given Your Church the variety of my voice; in that eternal may I be an attendant at Your wedding feast.”

Footnotes

1. This passage is based on the first chapter of Ezekiel where God appears on the chariot carried by the Cherubim.
2. Baptism.
3. Holy Scripture.
4. House of bread.
5. Eucharist; Christ (John 6:35, 58).
6. Gen. 3:7.
7. Rev. 7:9.

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CHRIST AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Father Matta El-Meskeen

History submits to God.

The Old Testament, beginning from the first chapter of Genesis, is a movement of creation and growth which starts from God to settle within man. God continues to direct and govern it with keen intent according to a definite aim. Consequently the movement of history in each single individual or across the life of a generation or that of a nation is subjected completely and in exactitude to His will and foreknowledge. For God is “King of the ages” (1 Tim. 1:17); and everything goes on “by His determinate counsel and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23); while all things are controlled perfectly, for God “has determined (for all nations) the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.” (Acts 17:26)

The transformation of time into salvation and eternity.

And even though the motion of time appears to be apart and disengaged from man: the sun rising and setting whether he wills it or not, the seasons rotate completely independent of him, yet in fact, this motion with all its grandeur and force is subjected by God unto man that he may make of it his own history: a living spiritual history stretching across the ages, and ultimately overriding time itself to merge into eternal life with God—where there will be neither sun nor moon, winter nor summer (Rev. 21:23). Christ Himself declared this end, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away” (Mark 13:31). So time, in its material rotation is dead and will pass away with its heaven and its earth; but in its connection with humanity, it is a living unceasing history of salvation; the history of God’s word which returns not empty. It is a movement beginning from God and ending in Him, and with it the redeemed man: “Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you.” (Jer. 1:5).

And if man moves in accordance with this will of God, i.e. in accordance with knowing God and glorifying Him, he will rise above the movement of time and will subjugate it in fact to God’s will; he will transform the hours, days and years into a history of salvation: a divine time, an eternal life in the Kingdom of God, “behold now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2); “my voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord.” (Ps. 5:3) As for the man who defies

God's will and ignores His knowledge and His glorification, he will fall under the movement of time and will become a dead part of the dead time, and will inevitably fall under the physical rotation of days. But in spite of this, he will become a servant of God under absolute compulsion unwittingly and unwillingly and therefore he will not rejoice in doing God's will.

Time serves God's Revelation.

The Old Testament in its entirety is a living history which speaks very plainly and clearly. It relates to us the story of God's continuous condescension and His connection with man to raise him above the movement of dead time, and that by the interception of His word forming of the rotation of the years a sacred living history: the history of God with man, or rather the history of man with God.

In other words all of the Old Testament is, at one and the same time, the history of God's work in man and the work of man in accordance with God's word or against it. Of the two, God was revealed most clearly with all His attributes. It would thus seem that the movement of time has resulted, by God's continuous interception in the Old Testament in the Revelation of God's Being unto man and in man through the submission unto His word and even through disobeying it. For man's disobedience became a new element for declaring God's might in subduing evil. When we read the Holy Scriptures, we find them, in appearance, mere historic events. But if we probe their origin and their aim, we discover that they all point to the Revelation of the Living God.

Here, we confront the question: what is the value of God's Revelation to man? Well, in fact here lies all the mystery of the Old and the New Testaments, and the very essence of man's value and the whole of history in its final context: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee (from within the fact of time) the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent". (John 17:3)

The Knowledge of God is the means of transferring man from time into eternity.

God is Truth, Life and Eternal Light. So the knowledge of the Truth is indeed sharing with Him; and the knowledge of Life is life and the knowledge of Light is inevitable illumination. Man, by losing the knowledge of God, loses Truth in its essence; loses Eternal Life and loses the Light. Consequently he will merely feel the motion of time overwhelming and overpowering him until he falls dead under it. Hence the knowledge of God rescues man from falling under the inexorability of time ending in death. Whereas the knowledge of God is His unceasing Revelation unto man's mind and heart: Revelation as a knowledge of comprehension and love and existence within the source of existence and an assurance of eternal life soaring over the movement of time and death.

But the fulfilment of God's Revelation unto man necessitated the entry of all generations into the experience of God throughout the ages, that man may ultimately comprehend God as lustrous Truth and Life Eternal. To attain this aim, man had to pass two stages with God, each as different from the other as can be. The first is the Old Testament, a stage wherein God's Revelation was indirect through the spoken word. The second is the New Testament declaring God's direct Revelation through the Incarnate Word. The difference between the two is summed up by St. Paul in his words, "God who . . . spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son . . .". (Heb. 1:1)

The Old Testament is under the power of time and the New Testament is beyond the power of time.

The Apostle's words are clear for God spoke by the prophets at sundry times (in the past), and through events (in diverse manners). As for the New Testament, it is in verity that God revealed Himself directly (in His Son) outside the bounds of history (spoke to us personally). It is thus evident that God's Revelation in the Two Testaments was on two contrasting planes complementing one another: 1. A Historic plane through the movement of time, events and the succession of generations. 2. A direct factual plane outriding time through the Incarnation—namely the appearance of God on earth in a human body.

But the historic method used by God for His self-revelation in the Old Testament was on three levels:

A. *The Royal Level:* This was by giving fixed promises to be fulfilled in time for the people as a nation living among others. These promises came to pass through judges, rulers and kings whom God moved and whose works He directed.

B. *The Sacerdotal Level:* This was by giving commandments, laws and religious ceremonies and rites, all of which necessitated the consecration of servants and the anointing of priests to teach the people and bring them near unto God.

C. *The Prophetic Level:* This was by granting prophecies and spiritual instructions connected with the future of the people concerning their continuous relation with God and their mission to the nations of the earth; these were disclosed to prophets speaking by the Spirit of God.

Yet the great wonder is that each of these three levels appears, with deep research in all the Holy Scriptures, to form one complete clear plan recorded in a reasonable logic heading towards one aim. For the judges, the rulers and the kings who followed one another over two thousand years in Israel, with their divergent morals and religious standards are all under One Divine Authority—as though they were in fact appointed by God to fulfill the One

Aim of God whether by their success or their failure. Similarly the priests and the levites, with the diversity of their degrees, works and characters were all united by One Duty across the ages. This duty they performed for the people; it was accepted by God whether they fulfilled it in faithfulness and contentment or under rebuke and wrath because of their rebellion. The same is true about the different prophecies proceeding from responsible or irresponsible men throughout the Old Testament; for the Holy Scriptures witness that all these prophecies came through the Holy Spirit and were fulfilled in their due time despite the personality of their proclaimers and whether the people accepted or disregarded them.

The unity of the historic movement represented in the king, the priest and the prophet.

The bigger wonder, however, is that these three levels centered on the king, the priest and the prophet which were the foundation of God's educative method for revealing Himself unto Israel were closely correlated in a supreme unity with one aim, though moving in time.

For the kingdom in Israel—namely the manner of ruling and the way by which the king lived—was the means for ensuring the worship and the temple ceremonies, the continuation of the priesthood, the daily offerings, and the setting up of priests and their fulfilling of their duties. All this was closely connected with what the prophets declared concerning the veracity and security of the aim towards which Israel was moving as a nation.

Here, the unity of Israel appears in the form of an organization: an organized royalty, an organized priesthood and an organized prophecy. But in its essence it is an organic living unity. For the king, the priest and the prophet do not represent three organizations, rather are they three organs in the body of a living nation moved by God and directed by Him towards a specific aim and a supreme ideal which is very important for all the world.

God's revelation in the king, the priest and the prophet.

The Divine Counsel behind this living body—namely a people ruled by a king anointed by God, served by a priest appointed by God, and inspired by a prophet led by the Holy Spirit—centers around God's desire to reveal Himself to the world through this living body moving across the ages and throughout the generations. For God used to be revealed in the king through his royalty as the Great Organizer and the Saviour of the people. He used to be revealed in the priests as the High Priest. He used to be revealed in the prophet and through his words as the Comforter and Teacher of the people.

Mediation of the king, the priest and the prophet between the people and God, a preparation for the appearance of the Messiah.

Still there is before us an astounding mystery which completes all this. The people of Israel were not considered as a body apart from Him, but were regarded by him as His first born for being the first nation to serve God according to a set Law. But such service was not fulfilled in the persons of their kings, their priests or their prophets, rather was it fulfilled in the person of the Messiah representing them before God in His divine capacity as the Son of God who is at the same time a Servant of God as an Israelite in Whom is no guile, for he is “of Abraham’s seed” and “the son of David” in the flesh.

Thus, the Messiah was regarded from the beginning as the *Eternal King* after Whose type rose David and the other kings anointed by God; in Him royalty will reach its summit, and the kingship of Israel will settle ultimately on His shoulders and to whose kingdom will be no end (Luke 1:33; see also Daniel 7:14-15). He will also be the *Priest* after Whose type was each priest raised to serve before God as a mediator for the people, and in Whom all priesthood will be consummated so that He may be the One Mediator between God and man. Likewise he is the *Prophet* in Whose name each prophet prophesied and to Him each prophet pointed by the Spirit declaring His Advent in the fullness of time. In Him will end all prophecy, all knowledge and all science of the world.

The Messiah is the ultimate aim of the kingdom of Israel, its priests and its prophets.

The New Testament has pointed to the perfect mystic relation between Israel as a nation and the Messiah, i.e. Christ, in such a way so as to attribute to Him all that was attributed to Israel with great precision. For instance, in referring to the Lord, Jesus Christ on His return from Egypt with the words “Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matt. 2:15) it used the very same words recorded at the exodus, as though Israel was moving symbolically within the range of the coming Christ, His life and His characteristics. Moreover the prophecies stretch to the extent of being able to address the Messiah in the person of Jacob, who is called Israel; for we find such expressions as “my servant Jacob” and “my servant Israel” (Is. 41:8; 44:21) in a manner applicable to the Messiah and to the people of Israel together without any disharmony. And this is the astounding mystery hidden behind calling Christ the Son and the Servant at one and the same time and of designating Him as the King, the Priest and the Prophet. He is an Israelite in Whom is no guile, ye rather is He the Veritable Israel. He is indeed the Son of God “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men”. (Phil. 2:6-7)

Here, we can plainly see the vital interrelation between the person of the Messiah and that of Israel; hence each word which proceeded from God, each mission and each movement unto Israel in connection with its kings, its priests and its prophets, relied in its depths on the personality of the Messiah and pointed to Him as the ultimate aim in His capacity as the Eternal King, the Only Priest and the One Prophet speaking in His own name and on Whom the whole existence of Israel rests.

Consequently, all the history of Israel with all the events of its kings, all the rituals of its priests and all the sayings of its prophets is itself the history of the Messiah and His Revelation, given symbolically in the form of a nation chosen with care and love to represent God amidst the nations of the earth and to declare His person and His mercy to them. Even the tragedies of Israel, its captivities, its continuous sufferings and its chastisements throughout its history cannot be discounted from God's positive actions by which He stretched forward with Israel to come nearer and nearer to the other nations of the earth, so that finally Israel was joined—despite itself—to the rest of the nations in the person of the Messiah who completed this joining and reconciled them in Himself through the Cross and thus ended the historic mission of Israel. The mission of the historic Messiah ended to give way for the mission of the Christ of nations, the Christ of Eternal Life.

Therefore, this close organic unity between the personality of Israel and that of Christ explains to us how all the historic events, the laws and the rituals together with all the teachings and the prophecies of the Old Testament—though they pertain to the people of Israel—cannot be explained nor understood except in the Person of Christ who is the ultimate aim of Israel and its beginning at one and the same time. For Christ, as St. Paul said, is the end of the law given by Moses and the kingship established by David and the prophecies spoken by the prophets. He is the very aim of Israel and of all men “by Whom they all consist”. (Col. 1:17)

All the history of the Old Testament with its people, kings, priests and prophets symbolizes Christ.

Consequently, the Old Testament prepared the way for Christ and pictured Him in time across the history on the level of symbols. For the historic events continued—in their depths—to point to Him with exactitude on the level of the prophecies until they ended in Him. Moreover, all the religious rites and ceremonies aimed at bringing the human spirit nearer to the mystery of Christ, the Real Lamb, until they became dyed by His Blood flowing from the Cross visibly and clearly. Also the prophecies continued to unfold the material wrappings which enveloped the truth of the kingdom of the coming Messiah: the kingdom of grace, truth, spirit and life until it became clearly visible, “. . . that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our

hands have handled, of the Word of Life . . . for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy . . .” (1 John 1:1 and Rev. 19:10). This means that Christ was and still is the center of the Bible, yea and the center of all of man’s redemptive history. One of the most illuminating passages which transfer the picture of the Messiah from His limited position in Israel to a center of salvation, glory and regality over all the world is the vision of Daniel, “I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13-14).

The Wise men of the Jews apperceived this truth.

This truth was one of the most outstanding teachings of the inspired rabbis in the era preceding the Advent; as proved by their saying, “Not only did all the prophets proclaim the coming of the Messiah, but the whole world was created for Him.” The same truth is the foundation of all the New Testament; Christ Himself emphasizes it, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27) On this very basis the faith in Christ was imprinted on the mind of the early Church, “For by him were all things created . . . And he is before all things and by him all things consist.” (Col. 1:16-17).

When the Apostles began to lay the foundations on which the Gospel was to be built in the New Testament, they turned their gaze to the Scriptures (or the Books of the Old Testament) for their inspiration and they applied what was recorded in them to the sufferings of Christ, His death and His resurrection, “. . . I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, . . . for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures . . . so we preach, and so ye believed.” (1 Cor. 15:1-11) It is also plainly evident from “The Acts” that the Apostles saw in Christ’s coming, His death and His resurrection the fulfillment of the aim of all the prophets and the consummation of all the Scriptures, “Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice . . . that is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel . . . Ye men of Israel . . . Jesus of Nazareth . . . being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him . . . being a prophet . . . He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ . . .” (Acts 2:14, 16, 22-31). “And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as

did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled . . .” (Acts 3:17-25).

St. Paul followed the same theological school, “Men of Israel and ye that fear God, give audience . . . For they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him . . . And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree . . . And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled . . .” (Acts 13:16-40; see also acts 17:2-3).

And to clarify to the reader both the importance and the pre-eminence of this method in founding the theology of the New Testament and the establishment of the evangelization, it suffices to bring out the solemn declaration of St. Peter in his second epistle. For this Apostle emphasizes in his declaration that the reliance on the Holy Scriptures in witnessing to the works of Christ, His suffering, His death and His resurrection surpasses his own personal experience. Listen to him saying, “And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.” (2 Pet. 1:18-19).

St. Paul follows this same patristic traditional method, considering that the reliance on the Holy Scriptures and applying the prophecies to the theology of the New Testament are the first-class foundations. As for the personal experience, even though it be a face to face confrontation, it takes the second place (see 2 Cor. 12:1-11).

This declaration from the two Apostles should sharpen our attention that we perceive the great importance given by the Apostles and the Disciples to the Old Testament, and the extent of their reliance on it in their evangelization. Yet though they underrated their personal experience, it is considered by us as parallel to the Scriptures, and an essential witness to the theological edifice of the New Testament.

This same method of relying on the Holy Scriptures in witnessing to the death of Christ and His resurrection, is still used by the Church up to the present. For we always say, whenever we recite the Creed “. . . He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures . . .”.

(Translated by Iris Habib el Masri)

How Can a Church Leader Fall?

By St. Vincent of Lerins

The fifth century Church Father speaks to the Church now in these times of confusion and addresses himself to a question which is frequently asked. The text is adapted from the translation of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.

Some one will ask, how is it that certain excellent persons, and of position in the Church, are often permitted by God to preach novel doctrines to Catholics?

Let us listen, then, to Holy Moses, and let him teach us why learned men, and such as because of their knowledge are even called Prophets by the apostle, are sometimes permitted to put forth novel doctrines, which the Old Testament is wont, by way of allegory, to call “strange gods,” forasmuch as heretics pay the same sort of reverence to their notions that the Gentiles do to their gods.

Blessed Moses, then, writes thus in Deuteronomy: 13, “If there arise among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams,” that is, one holding office as a Doctor in the Church, who is believed by his disciples or auditors to teach by revelation: well,—what follows? “and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake,”—he is pointing to some eminent doctor, whose learning is such that his followers believe him not only to know things human, but, moreover, to foreknow things superhuman. What next? “And shall say to thee, Let us go after other gods, whom thou knowest not and serve them.” What last? “Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams.” And why, I pray thee, does not God forbid to be taught what God forbids to be heard? “For the Lord, your God, trieth you, to know whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul.” The reason is clearer than day why Divine Providence sometimes permits certain doctors of the Churches to preach new doctrines—“That the Lord your God may try you,” he says. And assuredly it is a great trial when one whom thou believest to be a prophet, a disciple of prophets, a doctor and defender of the truth, whom thou hast folded to thy breast with the utmost veneration and love, when such a one of a sudden secretly and furtively brings in noxious errors, which thou canst neither quickly detect, being held by the prestige of

former authority, nor lightly think it right to condemn, being prevented by affection for thine old master.

Here, perhaps, some one will require us to illustrate the words of holy Moses by examples from Church History. The demand is a fair one, nor shall it wait long for satisfaction.

For to take first a very recent and very plain case: what sort of trial, think we, was that which the Church had experience of the other day, when that unhappy Nestorius, all at once metamorphosed from a sheep into a wolf, began to make havoc of the flock of Christ, while as yet a large proportion of those whom he was devouring believed him to be a sheep, and consequently were the more exposed to his attacks? For who would readily suppose him to be in error, who was known to have been elected by the high choice of the Emperor, and to be held in the greatest esteem by the priesthood? who would readily suppose him to be in error, who, greatly beloved by the holy brethren, and in high favor with the populace, expounded the Scriptures in public daily, and confuted the pestilent errors both of Jews and Heathens? Who could choose but believe that his teaching was Orthodox, his preaching Orthodox, his belief Orthodox, who, that he might open the way to one heresy of his own, was zealously inveighing against the blasphemies of all heresies? But this was the very thing which Moses says: "The Lord your God doth try you that He may know whether you love Him or not." . . .

In the Church of God, the teacher's error is the people's trial, a trial by so much the greater in proportion to the greater learning of the erring teacher. . . . An important fact truly useful to learn and necessary to remember is that it behooves all true Catholics with the Church to receive Teachers, not with Teachers to desert the faith of the Church.

COPTIC ICONS

Father Tadros Y. Malaty

ARTS AND THE COPTS

Art has been correlated with religion from the beginning of history, so that a strong belief has arisen that arts such as, painting, graving, music, songs, dancing etc., have come into existence as a result of religious beliefs.

In early Christian times, Eastern societies, especially the Egyptian were very religious, so many thousands preferred to live in the wilderness longing for the angelic life, while those who remained in the cities and countries were occupied by religious discussions.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus explained this state by saying that if you went into a shop to buy a loaf of bread, "the baker, instead of telling you the price, would argue that the Father is greater than the Son. The money-changer would talk about the Begotten and the Unbegotten, instead of giving you your money; and if you wanted a bath, the bath-keeper assured you that the Son surely proceeds from nothing."¹

It is evident from the above how the Christian faith penetrated into the Copts' daily lives, even in their eating, drinking, literature and arts. There is evidence that Christian symbols and images were inscribed on their rings, painted on their walls, doors, cups, plates, chairs, etc. . . .

For instance, in the Coptic Museum at Cairo, there is a Coptic ivory comb from the fifth century. On one side, Lazarus appears in the shape of an Egyptian mummy while Christ bearing a cross instead of a wand, appears beside it. Beside it also is a representation of the Healing of the Blind Man. On the other side of the comb, there is a mounted Coptic Saint enclosed within a wreath supported by angels.

THE COPTIC ART

No art has been subject to so much dispute as the Coptic Art.

The archeologist Strzugowski² hypothesizes that it is just a local continuation of the Hellenistic art. Maspero and Gaet look on the Coptic Art as an offshoot of Byzantine Art, and Elbera knows it as an authentic national Egyptian art. . . .

This confusion is a natural result of many factors:

1. Egyptian soil was ruled successively by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines etc. . . ., who had cultures and arts of their own. These rulers had their own districts inside the great cities of Egypt, where they left monuments, which are now mixed with the national ones.³

2. The present Coptic monuments do not represent the true quality of Coptic Art, for the most prized and valuable pieces were ruined in unceasing waves of persecutions⁴ as the Arab historian Al-Macrizi describes. To this effect Klaus Wessels says, "At the height of the medieval period, Arab writers describe magnificent paintings; those of the shrine of St. Mena, for example, were especially famed, but little survives. . . . However, to quote S. Der Nersessian, 'But even in important centers like Bawit in Upper Egypt or Saqqara in Lower Egypt, the large churches are completely destroyed and the from the inferior examples.' We can therefore only get a rough picture of what once was found in abundance, in the Churches and Monasteries."⁵

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COPTIC ART

Scholars give special interest to Coptic textiles more than Icons, for the latter were more exposed to destruction than the first; and until recently, Coptic textiles were exported to many foreign countries.

1. COPTIC ICONS AND HELLENISM

When Alexandria received Christianity through St. Mark the Apostle, it was ruled by the Roman Empire, and at the same time it was a leading center of the Hellenistic culture in the East. For this reason some scholars hypothesized that the Alexandrian Christians embraced the Hellenistic culture in expressing their feelings towards the new faith. They have proved this opinion by some monuments found in the Hellenistic centers at Alexandria, Fayoum Oasis and parts of the Delta. . . .

Nevertheless, other scholars explain that these monuments do not represent the authentic Egyptian art, and state that the Copts refused the Hellenistic culture. To this point Pierre du Bourguet says: "In the pre-Byzantine period, Coptic work appears to have been carried along in the general reaction against Hellenism".⁶

The same idea is mentioned in "Pagan and Christian Egypt", where it is said, "Greek art was always foreign to Egyptian taste, and it is doubtful if many of the pieces in the Greek style surviving from the Ptolemaic period were made of native use."⁷

Nevertheless, we can say that Coptic art, like Coptic Architecture, has its own type, independent from the Hellenistic or other style, although it was affected by these foreign styles.

It was not by chance that the Coptic art bears authentic national feelings from its commencement. Modern scholars mention the following reasons which created this attitude:

A. In the first century Alexandria was divided into three groups: the native, the Greek and the Jewish. Every group was proud of its own culture, arts and religion, despising those of the other two groups. The native group found in the new faith, that is Christianity, the essential elements of their ancient Egyptian religion, such as the Trinity and the life to come. Naturally the Egyptians earnestly embraced Christianity, while many of the Greeks in Egypt persisted for the most part in their paganism, so that until the fourth century one could with good reason call the Greeks in Egypt pagans and the Copts Christians.⁸

B. In Egypt, the Greeks' cultural, social and political standing contrasted sharply with that of the Egyptians. In essence a gulf existed between two parts of the population in Egypt.⁹

C. Although Christianity offered to the whole world a new positive attitude, it had its effect on all the various cultures and arts. At the same time it arose and heightened trends of independence in classes and races that had been hitherto forced by Rome to embrace Hellenism as the only recognized creed.¹⁰

The Egyptians were proud of the Pharaohs' culture after its christianization. To this effect, Herbert Read says, "But though it (Coptic Art) is a Christian art, part of an attitude toward life that was spreading far and wide in the East and West, the Christian art of Egypt is still Egyptian. . . ."¹¹

We can now say that as a result of the above mentioned factors, various types of art have run parallel to each other for several centuries. They were:

A. *The Popular art*, which bears the true national feelings, and is largely free from the influence of foreign attitudes. This type is called "Coptic Art," and has been referred to as "The Pre-Coptic Art."

B. *The Hellenistic Art*, represents works made in the Hellenistic centers, and a Hellenistic style. However it is not completely isolated from the Egyptian or the local culture.

C. *The Official Art*, commissioned by the State, and bears many characteristics of the Roman art.

Because of the existence of these three kinds of art in Egypt, some scholars think that Coptic Art does not have characteristics of its own, nor can it be classified under any one style.

2. COPTIC ART AND MONASTICISM

Stephen Gaselee draws attention to the Egyptian movement of Monasticism, as a form that had its effect on Coptic Art.¹² In fact, monasteries were not a form that made demands on art, but they were pure Egyptian institutions where Copts developed their media, language, religious ideas and their art.¹³

It is worth noting that in the fourth century the rapid appearance of these Coptic institutions co-incided with the disappearance of the Greek institutions, such as, the gymnasium, public baths and others. This meant the rapid de-Hellenization of Egypt.

3. *COPTIC ART AND BYZANTINE ART*

The establishment of Byzantium (Constantinople) as the capital of the Eastern Empire had its simultaneous effect upon Coptic and Byzantine arts. Undoubtedly, the best craftsmen of Alexandria were drawn to the new royal city.¹⁴ They transferred some Egyptian characteristics of art to Byzantium and at the same time some Byzantine characteristics were transferred to Egypt. This is shown in the Monastery of St. Mena near Alexandria and the paintings of Deir Bawit at Upper Egypt. For this reason some scholars looked upon the Coptic art as an off-shoot of the Byzantine Art, while others took the reverse position, saying that the Coptic art was anti-Byzantine.

Pierre du Bourguet states an adequate suggestion when he says, "The supposed hatred of the Copts for everything Byzantine calls for reservations, and cannot be presented . . . without substantial evidence. To do so is to forget the patronage of St. Helena, revered as she was throughout the whole of Coptic Egypt; the cult of Constantine—considered as a saint by the Copts, even before his canonization in Byzantium, the relations which existed between well-known Copts and particular Byzantine functionaries, and even certain emperors. . . ."

Pierre du Bourguet gives many instances for the influence of the Byzantine art on the Coptic art, although the Coptic art did not lose its feelings. One of these instances is the well-known icon of 'Christ the Protector of St. Mena the Monk', in which St. Mena stands on the right hand of Christ, while the Lord places His arm on his shoulders to protect him. Pierre du Bourguet recognized in this icon of the sixth century the following points:

A. It has some Byzantine elements like the nimbus, and the book which Christ holds, with its embellishment of simulated precious stones.

B. The icon relates an Egyptian story, for St. Mena was an Egyptian martyr.

C. The features of Christ are purely Egyptian.

D. The horizon is an Egyptian view; the color of the flaming sunset sky is typically Egyptian, and the two heads are portrayed into the horizon as though the Lord with His arm encircling the saint's shoulder, would enter with Him to that which is beyond earth's horizon. It is important to note here, that painting the sunset in a red color is a Pharaonic tradition, in which the divine sun reigns in splendor.

E. The two heads are very large and the proportion of the two bodies is very small in comparison. This is the attitude of a Coptic artist who appears to have shown little interest in proportions.

4. *COPTIC ART AND THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON*

In the fifth century, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Church of Alexandria was accused of being Eutychian. This heresy was attributed to Eutyches who assumed that our Lord has only one nature, for His humanity is totally absorbed in His divinity and has completely vanished like a drop of vinegar in the ocean. In fact, our Church believes in one nature of Christ, but she is not Eutychian, for the Lord's nature preserves all the human properties completely as well as all the divine properties, without mingling, interchanging, nor alternation. Christ has one nature, of two natures, for His humanity and divinity are united in the real sense of the word "union".¹⁵

Nevertheless the Alexandrian Pope was hindered from attending all the council meetings and was exiled. A battle waged in Egypt between the Melkites (the Byzantine Christians who were loyal to the Emperor) and the Copts. The Melkites tried in vain to appoint one of them as a Patriarch of Alexandria, or to ordain one of the Copts who agreed to follow them. The Coptic churches, monasteries and houses were destroyed, and the people were martyred by the Christian Melkites who possessed both civil and church powers. These circumstances created the national feeling of hatred by the Copts, towards every thing Byzantine, and thus the movement of what we call "Coptism" appeared.

At the middle of the seventh century, the Arabs conquered Egypt and it was the end of every relationship between Alexandria and the two capitals—Byzantium and Rome.

In this new stage, the Copts offered all their architectural experience to the new rulers, in order that the latter would not touch the church pillars. The art of textiles was growing, for its pieces were sent to the Arabian Desert, while at the same time paintings were exposed to destruction and valuable pieces were lost forever.

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THE MUSIC OF THE COPTIC CHURCH

Professor Ragheb Moftah

Music is the divine and the Eternal Art which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and thus helps to unite man with his Creator. Music, indeed, is the oldest of all arts and, like speech, is one of the primary things of life. Everywhere, since the beginning of the creation, there has developed a national music.

In early times, both in the East and West, Christian Liturgies, rites and prayers were influenced by the nature and the characteristics of the various countries to which the Gospel spread. Thus, every country composed its own ecclesiastical music in accordance with its particular knowledge and taste of music; and thus it came about that Byzantine ecclesiastical music is Byzantine by its nature; Egyptian ecclesiastical music is Egyptian; and Jewish synagogue music is Jewish. As additional evidence, we may note that Ethiopian ecclesiastical music is entirely Ethiopian, although the Ethiopian Church is a daughter of the Coptic Church and under its jurisdiction.¹

National traditions of music have considerably affected the formation of ecclesiastical music, and many nations took over, from their earlier religions, melodies which they found suitable for the New Faith. The Greeks certainly adopted such melodies, and the Copts being the direct descendants of the Ancient Egyptians who possessed a very ancient musical tradition (and from the early times worshipped their gods with hymns, music and elaborate rites) did the same.

Some of the Coptic hymns bear the names of towns which have long since disappeared; for example, the hymn called after *Singari* a town in the north of the Delta known in the time of Ramses II; and the hymn called Adribe from Atribis, a town which formerly existed in Upper Egypt.

Demetrius of Phaleron, the librarian of the Library of Alexandria in 297 B.C., reports that the priests of Egypt used to praise their gods through the seven Greek vowels² which they used to sing one after the other; and, in place of the flute or the harp, the utterance of these vowels produced a very agreeable sound. The music of many of the Coptic hymns is still entirely chanted on the one or the other of these vowels. The text of certain long chants may consist of only one verse, or merely a single word like Alleluia.

Scientific research has proved that the music of the Coptic Church is the most ancient ecclesiastical music which the world now possesses. The Coptic Church owes the preservation of this monumental and priceless heritage of her ecclesiastical music to her conservative nature which she has inherited from ancient times.

The great Egyptologist, the late Dr. E. Drioton, once wrote, "The key to the mystery of Pharaonic music will be found in a good edition of Coptic ecclesiastical music in use in our days".³

Another important point to be noted is that this music is not Greek, Arabic, Turkish or Western, but entirely Coptic.

A slight connection may be traced between the genuine traditional Egyptian Folklore songs still sung in remote country places, and the music of the Coptic Chant.

The most ancient, and the most sublime part of the Coptic Church music is that of the pathetic chants for Lent, Holy Week and funerals. The pathetic side of Ancient Egyptian music, as Herodotus says, had been firmly established in the nation, since the time, when, on the death of the son of their first king, they composed special mourning tunes.

No other music, however classical, can compare with the pathetic music of the Coptic Church, nor with the tremendous power it has on the human soul and the passions which it awakens in it.

It was, indeed, a fascinating experiment which I recently undertook with the Choir of the Institute of Coptic Studies (Cairo), in the great Temple of Horus at Edfu. This temple is in a complete state of preservation, in spite of the fact that it was built by the Ptolemies over 2000 years ago. Our Choir chanted in Mezzo forte pathetic hymns in the inner sanctuary reserved for the high-priest. Although this temple occupies an area of about 7000 s.m., the acoustics were perfect; the solemn sounds of the voice were distributed with equal intensity or degree of tone over the whole temple from one end to the other, as well as in the lateral chambers. The singing was distinctly heard even in the open courtyard between the pylons and the temple, which was reserved for the people. Indeed, this was a miracle of voice distribution, which is well worth serious study.

Coptic Music is entirely vocal and must be sung without harmony, since the keys of this music cannot be adapted to the harmonic system; and, if we were to try to harmonize this music, it would be necessary to find a special harmonic system, so as not to alter its real expressions and its original spirit, and this would not be an easy matter. It must, also, be strictly unaccompanied, because the vocal cords are the only instrument which can truly render the real character and special expression of this music.

The early Apostolic Church took over the chant-system of the synagogue which was entirely vocal; and the Church Fathers, like St. Clement of Alexan-

dria, always emphasized that the ecclesiastical chant should be strictly vocal. Indeed, the chant of the Greek Church and many other Churches has remained so till now.

The late Professor Newland-Smith of the Royal Academy of London; said: "Coptic Music is a great music and may be called one of the seven wonders of the world; and, indeed, if a Caruso filled with the Spirit of God, were to sing some of the Coptic themes in the form of a great oratorio, it would be enough to re-kindle Christendom".

Among the great collections of the Coptic Hymnology, there are a few melodies which admit of modern harmonization, and when this is done, the result is extremely fine music. Great music could also be composed on some of the Coptic themes. These themes have been considered by eminent musical authorities in the West to be exquisite "Tone-Poems". Furthermore, it is the opinion of these experts that, when these beautiful Coptic themes are made public, they will be sufficient to establish a new and uplifting type of music throughout the world. This harmonized Coptic Music, I am glad to say, will soon be recorded on disks which will be available to music-lovers.

Music plays a very important part in the Coptic Church, since all her services are entirely chanted. There are hymns for all occasions and for all seasons, which are impressive in their variety and richness. There are special hymns for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension, Whitsuntide, Saints' days, funerals, etc., many of which are naturally sung only once a year.

Coptic music until recently was not set down in notation, but was transmitted orally from generation to generation. In 1927, I invited Professor Newland-Smith to come to Egypt, and I collaborated with him in setting this music to western notation. We worked at this task until 1936, and now there are 14 volumes of this music in manuscript awaiting publication.

Coptic music is appreciated by both Occidentals and Orientals, even when it is new to them; and, whatever their taste in music may be, they listen to it with sympathy and profundity, and it makes a very deep impression upon them.

When you listen to this music, try to imagine yourself in one of the many churches which still survive from the fourth century, in which so many generations of devout people, mystics, and saints have lifted up their hearts to God in the words of the ancient Liturgies celebrated with solemn ritual, amid clouds of incense and echoes of chants which harmonized with the beautiful style of the architecture.

Imagine yourself listening to the Hymn Ten-ou-osht, (We worship the Father of Light) in this inspiring atmosphere, and the effect of this plain chant will cause you to forget entirely all worldly things so that your soul may be directed in adoration of God.

Another deeply moving hymn is “Shé-ré Ma-ri-a,” (Hail to thee, Mary) which is one of the themes of the Mystery of the Incarnation, that is, the taking on of our humanity by Christ in the womb of the Theotokos. The melody of this hymn which exalts the divine motherhood of the Holy Virgin expresses the profundity of the Mystery of our Redemption, and truly magnifies the dignity conferred by God on the meek Virgin who became the Queen of Heaven and our Protectress.

The Coptic Hymnology thus follows on the lines of the hymnology of the Churches of Apostolic foundation, and is itself a treasure-house of Christian poetic compositions which are both doctrinal and emotional in their contents.

Footnotes

1. This was the case until the fall of Emperor Heliogabalis, who abolished the seven vowels.

3. La clef du mystère de la music pharaonique se trouve donc dans une bonne édition de la music ecclésiastique copte en usage de nos jours. (From a communication of Dr. E. Drioton to the author in 1946.)

CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES

Salvation in the Orthodox Concept

By His Holiness Pope Shenouda III; Cairo 1967

This 192 page book is based on two lectures given by His Holiness in a conference for Sunday School teachers in Lower Egypt in March and April 1967.

In the introduction, the book advised against doctrines that are based upon one verse of Scripture, “The fool looks at one verse, or parts of a verse, separating it from its times and circumstances, and from all the general meaning. But the wise searcher for the truth gathers all the texts which deal with a specific subject in order to see what they mean.” Some Christians find in a single verse a false proof of the doctrine of Salvation through faith alone, such as: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31); “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God . . .” (Rom. 5:1); or “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5). These verses cannot be taken out of their context, and looked at alone without the other texts of Scripture that ask for good works.

Blood of Christ—the sole source of Salvation

The blood of Christ is available and sufficient to save all mankind, “And he is the propitiation for all our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). However, there are people who do perish because they fail to obtain this available salvation. Their failure is attributed to lack of any one of four important things: faith, Baptism, other sacraments essential for Salvation, and good works.

Faith

Faith is essential for Salvation (John 3:6, 18; 8:24; 20:31; Acts 13:38, 39; 16:31). But it should be a living faith (James 2:20, 26); a faith which works by love (Galatians 5:6; 1 Cor. 13:2); and a faith proved by works (James 2:18).

Baptism

The importance of Baptism for Salvation appears in many Scriptural texts: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16), "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). The Church practiced Baptism from its very beginning (Acts 2:37, 38, 41; 8:36; 10:47, 48; 16:15, 33).

Baptism is essential for Salvation because it is a sharing in the Death and the Resurrection of Christ (Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:3, 4, 5, 8; Gal. 5:24).

Other Sacraments

The Sacraments essential for Salvation are: Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist and Penance.

Chrismation is the unction of the Holy Spirit. (1 John 2:20, 27). Spiritual life does not depend on human power, but is a communion with the Holy Spirit. The Apostles taught that the gift of the Holy Spirit completes Faith and Baptism (Acts 8:14-17; 19:2-6).

The importance of *Eucharist* for Salvation is manifest in the words of our Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto you. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:53, 54). The Sacrifice of the Eucharist (which is the Sacrifice of the Cross) is needed for forgiveness of sins and for Eternal Life. Sins after Baptism are forgiven in the Holy Eucharist.

Faith, Baptism and Eucharist do not give immunity against sin because they cannot deprive man of his free will. No one is perfect and without sin. (1 John 1:8; Matt. 19:17). Repentance is a way to obtain the Salvation of Christ: "... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Repentance is not essential only for those newly converted, but also Christians need repentance throughout their life (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 19). This is why the Church has the Sacrament of *Penance* since Apostolic times (Acts 19:18).

Good Works

Salvation is not a prize for good works, but without good works there is no Salvation. However, good works need the co-operation of the grace of God working in us (John 15:5); they are the fruits of faith. These should be differentiated from the works which Scripture belittles, that include works of the law (like circumcision and Old Testament rites and feasts, and works not built on faith).

Sinful acts lead to perdition (Romans 6:16; Gal. 5:19-21; Ephes. 5:5, 6; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10). Even believers can perish because of their bad works:

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. . . . Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:26-29).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23). (See also Matt. 7:19, 20; 13:40-42; 25:41-46; Luke 13:3, 5; John 5:28, 29; Heb. 6:4-8)

The biblical teaching of the last judgment manifests the value of works: “For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27). “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:28, 29; see also Matt. 12:36 & 25:31-46; Rom. 2:5-7; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 14:13 & 20:12).

Grace and Human Struggle

If good works are necessary for Salvation, is man then saved by his works or by the grace of the Holy Spirit working with him? Those who take either extreme are mistaken. Man cannot be saved by his power alone, “for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). Your human arm, without the help of God, cannot save you however hard you struggle. On the other hand the grace of God alone will never save you without the co-operation of your free will. This co-operation had its Old Testament types in the example of Moses praying, while Joshua led Israel in its battle with Amalek (Exodus 17), and in the example of David using his sling against Goliath while he depended on the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 17).

With this co-operation in mind we find many texts in Scripture that speak about human struggle throughout all our spiritual life; examples of which are:

“. . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1)

“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.” (Heb. 12:4)

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col. 1:29)

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. . . .” (2 Tim. 4:7)

(See also 1 Cor. 9:25-27; Ephes. 6:10-18; 1 Pet. 5:8 & 9)

Confidence of Salvation

How far can a believer be confident of his final salvation? There is no limit for our hope in the mercies of God, and for the efficacy of Christ's blood. On the other hand man cannot trust himself and his free will, which may start in the Spirit, but finish by the flesh. There are many examples in the Scripture of believers who perished (Heb. 3:11; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:10). The atonement of Christ gives the soul enough confidence of salvation. But this does not mean that the believer is free to live in sin. An Old Testament type is the Passover, Although death did not reach the Israelites who sacrificed the Passover lamb, yet anyone who ate leavened bread in the next seven days was cut off from Israel. (Exodus 12:15, 23).

St. John mentions in his first epistle three foundations the Christian should have in order to be sure of his salvation:

1. *Good conscience:* “Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God” (1 John 3:21). Good conscience comes from obeying the commandments (1 John 3:22).

2. *Abiding in Christ:* “And now, little children, abide in him; that when, He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:28). This abiding in Christ is manifest in avoiding sin (1 John 3:6), obeying His commandments (1 John 3:24) and walking as He walked (1 John 2:6).

3. *Perfect love:* “God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God . . .” (1 John 4:16).

When do we reach final Salvation?

His Holiness says,

“If the believer can fall, and may perish, and if there were people who started in the Spirit, but perfected with the flesh, when can we then say of a man that he is finally saved?

“We say this when he ends peacefully his days of sojourn on earth; for we are in war and struggle as long as we are in the flesh. We are at war the result of which is not yet known. . . . No warrior is able to claim triumph till the war ends. Our war ends when we put off this body. Therefore the Apostle says, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12), and also, “considering the end of their conversation” (Heb. 13:7), meaning (consider how their lives ended).”

Scripture speaks plainly about a future Salvation: “for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed” (Rom. 13:11); “For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 3:20); “. . . to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.” (Heb. 1:14); “he shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” (Heb. 9:28); “. . . salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Pet. 1:5). See also: 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:10; and 1 Pet. 4:18.

His Holiness concludes,

“The Apostle Paul says, “Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). Hence these chosen people (the elect) have not received the Salvation with the eternal glory despite the fact they received Salvation through the blood of Christ in Baptism. but this was only the earnest (Eph. 1:14), which we may lose if we stop our struggle and our will strays away. . . . How do we receive this final salvation? In answer the Apostle says, “let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1). Whoever endures to the end will be saved.”

BOOK REVIEWS

The Dynamics of Salvation

A Study in Gregory of Nazianzus

By Donald F. Winslow. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Philadelphia Patristic Foundation; 1979. Pp. 214. \$7.50 (Distributed by Greeno, Hadden & Co. 518 Central Street, Winchendon, MA 01475).

St. Gregory Nazianzen, universally known as “the Theologian” or “the Divine”, a title which he shares only with the Apostle St. John, is famous in the Coptic Church for the liturgy that carries his name. He was born about 329 A.D. in Cappadocia. His mother, St. Nonna dedicated him to God since his childhood. Early in his life he saw in a vision two virgins dressed in white who invited him to join them; their names were Chastity and Temperance. Though he never lost sight of this early vision, he spent his youth in studying law at the most famous schools. From Caeseria in Cappadocia, he went to Caeseria in Palestine, then to Alexandria and finally to Athens where he stayed for ten years. A storm during the trip from Alexandria to Athens terrified the young Gregory, for he was not yet baptized, and it made him promise to offer his life to God if he was saved from sea. In Athens he was intimately connected with his famous companion St. Basil the Great, with whom he subsequently shared the solitary life at Pontus.

St. Gregory manifested in all his life a constant tension between the “Mountain” of contemplation and the “Throne” of Church service. His name as a bishop has been connected with three different sees, but he never really occupied any of them. Consecrated as a bishop of Sasima, whose governor was an Arian adversary, he never went there. He actually remained at Nazianzus, first to help his aged father, St. Gregory the Elder; and then after his death the care of that church was induced on him. Because of his health he withdrew to Seleucia from 375 to 380 A.D. He then responded to witness for the orthodox faith in Constantinople whose churches had been all taken by the Arian heretics. He started to preach in a rented house which he called “Anastasia”. Soon St. Gregory captured the heart of the majority for the true faith and the Arian Bishop was forced to leave the capital. St. Gregory became “actually” the archbishop of Constantinople. But in a few months he was

forced to resign. He retired again to the “Mountain” of his country estates for the last ten years of his life.

The *Dynamics of Salvation* is a study of the theology of St. Gregory based upon his central doctrine of “Theosis”. Christians throughout the centuries have confessed the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour; but what does this actually mean?

According to St. Gregory, the “economy” of God, the acts He wrought for our salvation, includes creation, providence, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, second coming and final judgement.

God *created* the spiritual world (angels), then the material and finally the human, a combination of the material and the spiritual. The latter was through the breath of God by which His image was imprinted. We were created to be happy, to adore God, to do good works and to imitate God, but more than this, we were created to grow. The free will which was a potential for growth was also a potential for sin. *The fall* started in the spiritual creation (Satan), which led man to disobedience by offering him “immediate” theosis, rather than growing towards it according to the economy. The results of the fall were threefold: death, interior conflict between body and soul, and transmission of sin to all mankind.

The fall of man called for a new creation (or re-creation). This was accomplished in Christ, the New Adam who came to save the Old and conquer sin with all its results and fulfill the originally intended plan of theosis. St. Gregory indicated the salvic action of *Incarnation* by three themes: *condescension* (Christ assuming a full humanity—body and soul), *kenosis* (self-emptying as described by St. Paul in Phil. 2:7) and *recapitulation* of all humanity.

“*The Cross* of Jesus Christ is”, as Winslow sums up the teaching of St. Gregory on the subject, “the culmination and fulfillment of the economy of Incarnation . . . Gregory sees manifest on the Cross of Calvary the deeper meaning of the condescension and self-emptying of the Son of God, and of His recapitulation of the whole created order. God comes down—all the way down—to the lowest level of our fallen condition, namely death. God empties himself of his glory and humbles himself before the altar of divine sacrificial love. And God resumes in himself the misdirected pilgrimage of the first Adam, thereby obliterating on the Tree of the Cross the consequences of the violation of the Tree of Knowledge so that we might once more partake of the Tree of Life.”

But *the salvation* which has already been accomplished for us by Christ’s death, resurrection and ascension has still to be worked in us. As saved, we still have free will; our salvation can never be a matter of coercion. For the individual the new creation is entered into through the work of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. But Baptism is not the final reward, it is a gift, that has to be

cultivated, and salvation, even after Baptism, is something that must be continuously worked on.

Thus *Christian life* is marked by a constant and continual growth both in asceticism (imitating the suffering of Christ as a basis for theoria or contemplation) and in philanthropia (imitating Christ's love for mankind). Both (asceticism and service) are instruments in appropriating the salvation made universally available in Christ, and individually available in Baptism. But there is always a constant need for divine grace. *Salvation depends on the co-operation of both grace and moral response.*

In its concluding pages the book discussed the meaning of the term "*theosis*", which is not an easy term to define and is rather shocking in its English translations of deification or divinization. It is a biblical concept though not a second century. It was consistently used by St. Gregory to describe the gradual growth in our relation to God, coming closer to Him, knowing Him better, and getting progressively united to Him.

The Dynamics of Salvation is more than a scholarly study of a great Church Father. Because it provides the patristic answers to many theological problems that are still alive with us the book is highly recommended for pastors, and teachers of religion, and for anybody who has more than general knowledge of Church history and is acquainted with theological terms. There is a very extensive bibliography on every topic for further reference. The only drawback is the nearly complete absence of biblical references. It is artificial to separate theological patristic studies from biblical studies, and it would be more appropriate if the editors of the Patristic Monograph Series make the extra effort in future issues to give the scriptural references of the main theological themes. This is more consistent with the method of the Fathers who were actually students of the Word, and not abstract theologians.

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His Holiness Pope Shenouda III and Father Tadros Malaty during a visit to the monasteries of Wadi el-Natroun. Now the Pope is in exile, Father Tadros is in prison, while the Church is praying and waiting eagerly for their safe return.