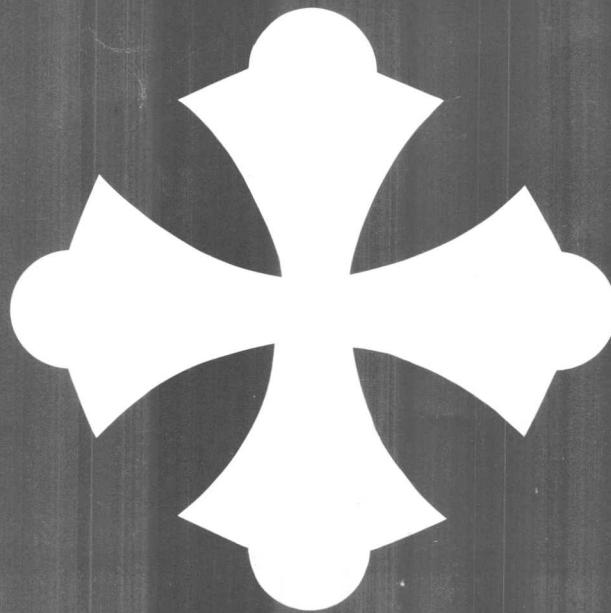


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 6, Number 1 Spring 1985

- *POPE SHENOUDA ON CHRISTIAN
UNITY*
- *A CHRISTIAN READING OF A NAG
HAMMADI TEXT*
- *SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA:
COMMENTARY ON ST. LUKE*



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

On January 1, 1985 His Holiness Pope Shenouda III was released from his imprisonment in the Desert Monastery of Saint Bishoi where he had been forced to stay under armed guard for forty months. Rejoicing at this news we declare with the Psalmist,

“Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.

“Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

“For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.” (Ps. 96:2-4)

At this moment we express our warmest thanks to the friends of the Coptic Church everywhere who supported her during her time of trial through their prayers and their actions. We are praying and hoping that Pope Shenouda may be given strength and guidance to direct his flock without any hindrance and to continue his ecumenical work which was halted by his exile. Coptic Church Review is happy to introduce this issue by a speech on ***Christian Unity*** delivered by His Holiness in his Cairo Cathedral during the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1974.

In this issue we have two articles for Lent which is a period of fasting and repentance. In ***The Holy Fast, the Late Sadek Raphael***, a lay theologian and spiritual director, shows how to practice fasting in a spiritual manner suitable for God's sons who live in His Kingdom, not as a mere custom or a Church obligation. ***Blessed Father Bishoi Kamel*** (1931-1979) discusses ***Repentance in the Song of Solomon***. Without leaving this Old Testament book he meditates upon the role of God's grace and man's will in reaching a Christian repentance.

Dr. Leslie MacCoull, who previously wrote for us ***Coptic Orthodoxy Today*** (Winter 1983), has for us in this issue another challenging article, ***Egyptian Coptic Language Pamphlets: The Challenge of a Typology of Errors***. Dr. MacCoull, a well known Coptic scholar who obtained her Ph.D. in Coptic from the Catholic University and until 1984 was the Director of Studies of the Society for Coptic Archaeology. She now serves as the U.S. Representative for this society after she was forced out of Egypt because of her publicizing the cultural genocide and physical persecution of the Copts. In her article, Dr. MacCoull calls for the creation of a Coptic language academy in order to organize a proper effort on proper scholarly

foundation for the revival of the Coptic language. She gives an account of the individual attempts to preserve the language in the last hundred years, which, however sincere and hard working, lacked the modern tools, the advanced scholarship and the financial support.

In *Leading to Light*, The Reverend James E. Furman examines *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, one of the documents of the Coptic Nag Hammadi library which was discovered in 1945. Rev. Furman is a parish priest of the Episcopal Church and serves on the San Diego Diocesan Council. He is highly interested in Church history especially the Cappadocian Fathers and the Roots of Egyptian Christianity. Last year he submitted a resolution which was adopted unanimously by the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego asking for the religious freedom of the Coptic Church and the release of Pope Shenouda.

Editor

Acknowledgement

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CHRITIAN UNITY

HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III

A speech given by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark the Apostle in the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, held in St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral in Cairo 1974.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God. AMEN

We thank our Lord and Master Jesus Christ who has granted us this opportunity to gather in church to pray for its Unity and solidarity, and for us to become one in Him.

Christian Unity Is God's Will

"So there shall be one Flock and one Shepherd" (John 10:16). In His last prayer in Gethsemane, Our Lord said: "They may all be one, even as you Father, are in me, and I in you that they also may be in us. So that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21-24).

What does that mean?

It means that Christian Unity is essential for Faith and Evangelism. The mere existence of so many Christian divisions and factions is the greatest stumbling block to the rest of the world. How could they believe while the truth appears lost amidst controversy and contradiction between various churches?

"They may be one . . . So that the World may believe . . ." and listen to that Comparison and what a Comparison it is!: "They may be one even as we are one" (John 17:22) On his way to Golgotha, the Lord's sole concern was the Church's Unity. He had given a Commandment and a prayer to His disciples. The Commandment is: "To love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13) and the Prayer is that: "they may be one even as we are one".

Church Unity is a Natural State

We all know that the Church is the Body of Christ. Christ has one body. He is the head, we all are the body. It cannot be such a mutilated Body. The Church is Christ's

bride. Christ has one bride . . . one Church. “I am the Vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5) One vine: One church: We all are branches.

Church Unity Is An Ecclesiastical Fact

In the creed we say: “Truly we believe in One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church.” Therefore, One Church it must be; it gathers all; and it is Holy.

If we say many churches, we would have broken our Creed. The plural word “churches” is mentioned in the Bible in a geographical sense only. So, it is one Church, no matter where it exists.

Church Unity Is An Historical Inheritance

“. . . those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32) We also find lots of delightful expressions about this “One Church” in St. Paul’s plea for Unity in his Epistle to the Ephesians:

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, for bearing one another in Love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:1-6)

Christianity started as one Apostolic Church in Jerusalem, and it will end also as one Church in the Eternal everlasting life, gathering not only all those who believed but also the angels . . . in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Unity Is Love

If we are divided, then we don’t love one another . . . “this is my Commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). If we have this kind of love, the whole world will see Christ in us. “God is Love, and he who abides in Love abides in God and God abides in him” (John 4:16).

Let us love one another first, then in an atmosphere of love we can discuss theological matters. Divisions in the Christian world happened not because of theological differences but because we abandoned the love we had in the beginning. Every church looked for the others’ faults. Theologians studying the nature of Christ, which is full of Love and peace, became divided and excommunicated one another.

Would that we loved one another without arguments about matters that we know we cannot fully comprehend.

St. Paul says: “I could not address you as spiritual men . . . there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving like ordinary men?” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Unity is Love. We don’t have to compromise the faith, but with Love, discuss it and reach Unity.

Unity Is Strength

Divisions have weakened our Universal Apostolic Church. Christians united with Love can be compared with bricks united in one building; one Church.

Christianity nowadays confronts waves of atheism, materialism and permissiveness which could destroy the world. The modern world does not favour an Orthodox, Protestant or Catholic approach to life. All could be lost. Christian Unity will give the Church strength and solidarity against the permissiveness, materialism and unbelief of our time.

Unity Is Humility

We cannot reach Unity unless we humble ourselves. Without humility we could, wasting time, be busy finding who is going to be the head of a united church and which Church is going to lead the rest. When the disciples had these thoughts, our Lord said to them:

“It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26-28).

St. Paul addresses us saying: “Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.” Then he reminds us of the ultimate humility in Christ Himself adding: “Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but ***emptied Himself taking the form of a servant***, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross.” (Philippians 2:2-8).

If we are seeking Christian Unity, then let us have such Christlike humility.

Unity Is The Work Of The Holy Spirit

We - Dear Brethren in Christ - have not yet reached this Unity but we are praying for it now. We believe that Church Unity is the work of the Holy Spirit and the result of God's intervention in His Church. Don't think that Unity can be achieved merely by our strength or our knowledge of the Bible. It cannot be achieved by our wit or theological ability. “Unless the Lord builds the House, those who build it labour in vain” (Psalm 127:1). Unless the Lord unites the Church, Ecumenical Conferences and Theological Meetings will be held in vain.

Let us pray that God intervenes and pours out upon our hearts His love and humility, so that when we open our mouths, we speak His word.

We have met to pray to God, to pray that the Lord fulfills what He promised His Church; one Flock, one Shepherd. We pray that the Church may live invested by His peace and security.

Some could ask: What steps have you taken on the Road to Church Unity and what results have you reached?

The Coptic Orthodox Church has taken part in all Theological Conferences that have been held for Church Unity. We met with the Uniate Orthodox and with Byzantine, Chalcedonian Churches including the Orthodox of Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Constantinople. We met the Roman Catholics in their conferences. We are members of the World Council of Churches.

We Copts belong to a conservative and traditional Church, however, we extended our hands to Unity and we studied all aspects because it is the Lord's wish and commandment.

In 1971, when I was a Bishop, I attended the Vienna Pro Oriente Conference. In that conference, we expressed our faith in a "Common Formula" upon which we all agreed and it is as follows:

"We all believe that Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Word, the Incarnate God. We believe that He was perfect in His Divinity and Perfect in His Humanity and that His Divinity never departed His Humanity not even a single instant nor a twinkle of an eye."

I asked them in the Pro Oriente Conference to leave aside all the ancient Greek phrases which had caused divisions and disagreements. To choose simple expressions easy to comprehend. To leave the difficult philosophical matters to the Theologians. Christianity is not only for Philosophers! Our Lord spoke simple, easy words. The children, the illiterate, the uneducated and all the masses understood Him clearly. He never used difficult expressions, He explained even the Parables to His disciples.

In Vienna, we discussed "The One Nature". We Copts and the Roman Catholics believe in what St. Cyril expressed as "The One Nature of the Incarnated Word" but they thought (wrongly) that we believe in one nature and deny the other. This is not the case. We believe that the two natures, His divinity and His Humanity, are in Perfect and Complete Unity. We called this Perfect Unity "The One Nature". It is neither Divinity nor Humanity, it is the Unique Nature of the God Incarnate.

In our Ecumenical meetings, we should talk about actual beliefs regardless of what happened in the past. We must avoid complex and vague expressions. In spite of all the problems that might arise about History, Rites, Ecumenical Councils and so on we, shall achieve good results with Love, Good Spirit and Determination. We shall achieve this together. It is God's will.

The whole Christian world is anxious to see the Church Unite. Christian people - being fed up with divisions and dispersion - are pushing their Church Leaders to do something about Church Unity and I am sure that the Holy Spirit is inspiring us.

Christian Unity will be a magnificent Universal achievement for generations to come.

Let us Pray that we unite in the Faith delivered to us by our Great Fathers who kept it, defended it, and sacrificed their lives for it.

Let us Pray that God works in our hearts and thoughts so that we fulfill His will.

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit now and for evermore.

AMEN

Translation by Dr. Samir M. Hakim
Scotland, U.K.

THE HOLY FAST

Sadek Raphael

“What you should know about fasting in order to enjoy its benefits.”

My spiritual father trained me not to be embarrassed in uncovering every thought that crosses my mind for the sake of creating in me a true spiritual nature on firm and stable foundation, in love, hope and faith, a nature that reflects on me the freedom of the children of God for whom Christ is the life they love, not merely knowledge they acquire to repeat or forget.

What numerous conversations we had in matters concerning life!! By “life” I mean Christ, the Lord of glory, because He is the light, the truth and the life.

I said, “Father, what do you advise concerning fasting? Truly I prefer not to fast rather than to fast only as a matter of habit. Refraining from food for a period of time then eating specific kinds of food as a matter of routine, is not in any way different from receiving other kinds of food any other time, also as a matter of routine. It is thus clear that neither of the above takes away from or adds to my life so long as the matter does not go beyond conforming to a custom. Moreover, I do not favor adhering to a fast for no other reason than it being imposed on me. As you know, Father, dictated rules have their burden, and they usually end up either being rebelled against and broken or reluctantly practiced, a case of hypocrisy towards oneself and towards God; it is as though I am offending God by doing what is supposed to please Him. Lastly, but not finally, to be satisfied by saying that fasting is a way to avoid God’s anger, in my opinion, makes the relationship between man and his creator based on terror and fear, not on love and willingness, while God, as you know, is love, and out of His love for me, He has created the different kinds of food for me to eat from and give thanks, not to eat from and anger him. Besides, God is offended by sin and evil doings not by the consumption of food. There are more points I shall refer to in due time, but for now what I have presented regarding the subject of fasting will suffice to start the discussion.”

* * *

My spiritual father answered, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God”, (Mark 12:34) as you feel that His is not a kingdom of food and drink, and that His law is not a rigid law that rebukes and forbids, stirring restlessness and rebellion, but

rather a law of life, glory, love and benevolence. I have noticed in your talk and struggle between the spirit and the body, and your spirit's endeavors to be freed of the body's fetters in an attempt to offer to its creator one form of worship which is fasting. Do you know the meaning of the word 'worship' in the Kingdom of Heaven, so as to understand what fasting means to the children of the Kingdom, those children who are struggling under the banner of the Cross?

"The Kingdom of Heaven is a spiritual kingdom, most sweet and altogether desirable (Songs 5:16), whose children are spiritual souls and angelic spirits, because it is the meeting place of the inhabitants of heaven and earth, all of whom are abundant in the Saviour's gifts and graces and all with one heart-beat overflowing with the kindness of God, and with one intuition and one mind that comprehends the depth of his peace, and his unending blessings. Thus, all powers of the Kingdom react with overflowing and unlimited gratitude and praise to Christ the King.

"To worship is to reciprocate the love of the Creator with an appropriate and adequate love. No love can equal His love except the love which is through His own Son and essence. Thus, you love God the Father through God the Son in you, Whose Holy Spirit you have received by faith and Baptism, to aid you in keeping His commandments; hence you abide in Him and He in you. If you submit and resign yourself to His Spirit, the Father will be glorified by this love which manifests His Son in your life. By this we become, according to His words and His words are truth, "partakers of the divine nature", (2 Peter 1:4), and beloved sons in His spiritual Kingdom.

"What are fasting, praying, charity, patience, piety, purity and the practice of all spiritual virtues but natural properties of the spiritual life of the children of God. As in your carnal life you react to instincts, so in the spiritual life, the soul, in the new nature obtained in baptism, reacts by doing the will of God which is goodness. Hence, the nature of the spiritual souls is always doing good by the Spirit of God that is within them, at all times and towards all people, with ease and willingness, finding in this their life, pleasure and sustenance. That is why the Lord told his disciples, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know . . . My food is to do the will of him who sent me . . .' (John 4:32, 34).

"Therefore, my son, it is in vain, while you are living a carnal life, to try to understand what is spiritual. This understanding is a quality of the lives of the children of God in the spiritual kingdom of Heaven. It is thus in vain to try to acquire one of these qualities without having a true spiritual life, because if you do, you will practice carnally what does not naturally belong to the carnal life. It is therefore not surprising when you feel its burden and eventually its uselessness, then you stumble and fail to gather its spiritual fruits.

"Do you truly wish to sit at the desirable table of fasting in your Father's house of spiritual glory whose riches and joys no human heart can imagine? If so, first go and pluck out of your heart and thoughts the spirit of this world and the desires of the

flesh, and wash your pure baptismal garment in the tears of the second Baptism which is repentance. Then will I be able to lead you into the spiritual house of your Father and to seat you at the desirable table of fasting; to God be the glory for ever.”

* * *

My spiritual director left me while my soul was longing for the shadows of perfect peace under the shelter of his spirit. As he was speaking to me about the Kingdom of God, I felt he was speaking as a son of the Kingdom who is relaying what he sees, hears, feels and tastes. His departure filled me with an awesome deep sense of sorrow, but his farewell words echoed inside me and I kept repeating them to myself, “Do you truly wish to sit at the desirable table of fasting in the glorious house of your Father, whose riches and joys human hearts cannot imagine? Go first and pluck from your heart and mind the spirit of this world and the desires of the flesh, and wash your baptismal garment in the tears of repentance, then will I be able to lead you into the house of your Father . . .”

The Comforter, by Whose act I was taken through the words of my spiritual father, and by Whom I was sealed in Baptism, I found within me, shining over my sorrowful soul with consolation and continuing the interrupted conversation, “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you. So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God . . . And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.” (Rom. 8:11-17).

I felt the Spirit within me strengthening my weakness, supporting my faith and preparing the way of truth and of Christ’s love before me. Then the words of my spiritual father re-echoed, “Do you truly wish? With all your heart, in faith and love?” I answered, “With your Spirit, my Lord Jesus Christ, I do wish, help my weak faith . . .”

* * *

Since that time I became pre-occupied by fasting rather than by the talk about fasting. Even when the fasting days were over, the effect of fasting within me never ended. Thus fasting led me to spiritual meditation, trained me to struggle against my passions by keeping the commandments, guided me to victory. In the field of struggle I met my spiritual director who had gone ahead, and who, when he left me, had promised we would meet there. He greeted me with joy and in the manner of the glorious Resurrection addressed me, “Christ, in the active faithful, has risen,” and I in the Spirit in exultation and gratitude answered, “And in my weakness, through your prayers and guidance, He has indeed risen.” He said as he was leaving to continue in his struggle, “It is in all who love Him in active faith and obedience that He

has risen. Glory be to His Resurrection and to those who hear His word and act accordingly . . .”

* * *

Did you know my dear reader, that though you have been born through Baptism of water and the Spirit, and though through fasting and praying your wings have grown, your spirit will not be able to soar in the heights of the Kingdom, and you will not be saved from the jaws of death and temptation except by humility and acts of charity in which you are strengthened by keeping the commandments and the Sacraments? Only this way can you reap the fruit of fasting which is the glory of rising with the Saviour Who through your actions will always prove that He is indeed risen in you through a life of victory over the flesh, the world and the devil.

* * *

The glorious Beloved, in the Church's commemoration of His life and His feasts, wishes to offer you His life and the power of His Resurrection so you can share in His glory - Do you desire, and truly desire, what He desires? Behold he who did not wish so has left his house desolate, and he who wished while his heart was still in the world has made Judas his example! Hurry then, and make a choice of what you really desire, for times are evil and short. For yet a little while, and the coming One shall come and shall not tarry, bringing His recompense (Heb. 10:37; Rev. 22:12). Glory be to God for ever and ever Amen.

Translated by Lily Soliman

REPENTANCE IN THE SONG OF SOLOMON

Blessed Father Bishoi Kamel

Christian repentance in this book is not merely the determination to give up sin, but it is rather an admission of weakness, then a decision to carry the cross and follow the beloved Lord, and finally throwing oneself in the Father's bosom and enjoying His kisses.

Repentance in this Book reveals the role played by man in discovering the darkness of his nature, disposition and actions, "I am very dark" (Song 1:5), and the role of God who sees everything in us as beautiful, saying, "You are all fair, my love (4:7) . . . Your voice is sweet (Song 4:7) and your face is comely (Song 2:14), . . . your lips distil nectar (prayer)" (Song 4:11). Here it behooves the soul to say, 'I am very dark in my own eyes but comely in the eyes of God. (Cp. Song 1:5).

Repentance is the union of man's desires with the desires of God's heart, "O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me! . . . Behold, you are beautiful my love . . . My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh, that lies between my breasts." (Song 8:3; 1:15, 13)

Finally, repentance is a tearful supplication to God with the prophet Jeremiah, "Bring me back that I may be restored . . . my God" (Jer. 31:18), and with Solomon, "O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth!" (Song 1:2).

God's Role in Repentance

(1) *God overcomes all barriers and walls created by our sins.* The Lord Jesus came down from Heaven looking for us, crossing all barriers. He *emptied* himself, was born in a manger, and was raised on the cross. The Song of Solomon describes this meaning by saying, "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills." (Song 2:8). "Behold there he stands behind our wall", the wall is the wall of sin which we have built, the wall of ego and dignity, the wall of love of this world. He goes on to say, "gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice" (Song 2:9). The windows are the gaps of love made by the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, in our difficulties, in our prayers and in our study of the Bible . . . During all this God opens out windows to watch over us through them.

(2) *The Beauty of Human Nature captivates the heart of God:* - Human nature has no

beauty, it is all black in nature and character. But God has washed it in baptism, placed His Spirit in it and created in it a new man that is renewed according to God's image. Thus, the beauty in us is God's work, "we will make you ornaments of gold, studded with silver." (Song 1:11) This beauty God desires and searches for no matter how much trouble it takes. It is the beauty of the fruits of the Spirit, the beauty of meekness, "your eyes are doves", Song 1:15), "you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes" (Song 4:9); the beauty of prayer, "let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely." (Song 2:14); the beauty of purity, "that looks forth like the dawn, bright as the sun" (Song 6:10); the beauty of spiritual strife and perseverance in suffering, "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all the fragrant powders of the merchant". (Song 3:6)

(3) *God's love for man*: The whole book revolves around God's love for man; as though it were the book of the Cross on which God was raised for the love of the daughters of Israel. "King Solomon made himself a palanquin (throne of the cross) . . . it was lovingly wrought within by the daughters of Jerusalem. Go forth . . . and behold King Solomon, with the crown (crown of thorns) with which his mother (the people of Israel) crowned him on the day of his wedding (day of his crucifixion), on the day of the gladness of his heart." (Song 3:9-11) The whole book is a melody of love "we will extol your love more than wine" (1:4) . . . "Tell me, you whom my soul loves", "O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me" (8:3), "his banner over me was love." (2:4) "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

Motives of Repentance

(1) *Bitterness of Sin and its cruelty on the soul*. ". . . where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon," i.e. *height of temptation*. Small sins sneak into our lives and the soul is complaining. "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards." (Song 1:7; 2:15)

(2) *Cruelty of the World*: The world lures us and intrigues us until it strips us of grace "They took away my mantle, i.e. *uncovered me*. The world sets traps for us and causes great evil to befall us, they beat me, they wounded me." (Song 5:7)

(3) *Meditation on God's love for me*. Recalling His love and His work in my life, makes me say "with great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." "I am sick with love". (Song 2:3, 5) The desire for a life with God is the greatest cause for repentance, and this is what made the soul start the speech of repentance saying, "O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth!" (Song 1:2)

Role Played by Man in Repentance:

(1) *Prayer*: This is the beginning of the book, "O that you would kiss me". The soul is shy and unable to kiss, so she asks Him to kiss her. Asking here means praying, because there is no repentance without prayer. The saints have asked for repentance

in tears, "Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon." (Song 1:7) Brother, did you in tears, ask Jesus to kiss you saying, "I am bashful and incapable of repentance," "O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth." "Upon my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves . . . I will rise now and go about the city, . . . in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves" (Song 3:1, 2)

(2) *Asking in the third person:*

A - *The request of the weak and disabled:*

Let the Father start by kissing me because I am unable to do anything. Lord Jesus I sincerely wish to repent but I fail every time, to the extent that I sometimes say that repentance is impossible for me. Then I cry with Jeremiah in all weakness, (Jer. 31:18) "Bring me back that I may be restored, for thou art the Lord my God." "O that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." I confess that alone, I am weaker than the world, weaker than sin itself and weaker than the flesh. But with You, my God, I become strong, with one kiss from You, my soul is strengthened. Just say one word and my salvation will begin. Bid me, "Stretch out your hand", to be restored. Tell me, "Your sins are forgiven". "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). Lord Jesus, every time I stand before you I shall say, "O that you would kiss me with the kisses of your mouth!" I shall ask for that kiss so I can obtain it from you as you did give it to the prodigal son.

B - *Supplication of the Bashful:*

O that you would kiss me . . . for I am shy because I am:

Full of Conceit: God endowed me with many talents and gave me many spiritual and physical gifts and I depended on what He gave me and forgot about Him. I was proud of what He gave me and not of Him. I bragged about my intelligence, my physical beauty, my education, my wealth, and my talents, thinking that I was the source of all these, "But you trusted in your beauty . . . for it was perfect through the splendor which I had bestowed upon you, says the Lord God." (Ezekiel 16:15, 14).

Unfaithful to His Love: He gave me many talents that I squandered on a life of extravagance. He gave me wealth that I spent on evil, just to anger Him. He gave me art and intelligence, and I used them in doing what annoys Him. He gave me the ability to meditate, read and love and I have turned them towards evil thoughts, useless books and love of the world . . .

Disdaining His Love: How much good has He done for me! He died and saved me. He gave me His body and blood and took my body and raised me with Him. He gave me success, and saved me from many troubles. He reared me from childhood to this day and gave me a lot of protection. Yet I still forgot His love and under the pretence of the responsibilities of life, I paid little attention to Him, and did not keep His commandments, refusing to sacrifice anything for them. My God! Am I entitled to cry now saying, "O that you may kiss me with the kisses of your mouth"?

C - *Supplication of the believer in God's Love:*

Inspite of my weakness and shame for disdaining His love, I still believe that God loves me and longs for me, "O that you may kiss me with the kisses of your mouth!" "O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me, like the prodical son." He desires my prayers and tears, "You have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes." (Song 6:9) He longs for my prayers, "Your voice is sweet and your face is comely." (Song 2:14) For this I shall ask in faith all my life, for my big share in the Lord's kisses, in spite of my black color, weakness, and shame. (3) *Repentance with Courage:*

On the part of man, repentance is an act of courage and perseverance. Thus God admires the beauty of the penitent and his strength, 'I compare you my love, to a mare of Pharaoh's chariots' (Song 1:9), "all girt with swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh, against alarms by night." (Song 3:8) Zachaeus bravely left half his wealth to the poor. Matthew left the tax collector's table and followed Jesus, the Samaritan woman left her five husbands, the woman who was a sinner left her past and St. Antony gave up two hundred acres after hearing the Lord's voice. St. Macarius lost his honor and endured shame for Christ's sake. Moses, the black, gave up his passions. Repentance in the eyes of the Lord is likened to the movement of a mare of Pharaoh's chariots, or to a terrible army with banners (Song 6:4, 10). Only the penitent soul is worthy of the kisses of the Lord and the embraces of His arms.

Translated by Lily Soliman

EGYPTIAN COPTIC LANGUAGE PAMPHLETS: THE CHALLENGE OF A TYPOLOGY OF ERRORS

L. S. B. MacCoull

‘Has a nationality anything dearer than the speech of its fathers? In its speech resides its whole thought domain, its tradition, history, religion and basis of life, all its heart and soul. To deprive a people of its speech is to deprive it of its one eternal good . . . With language is created the heart of a people.’ So wrote Herder in 1783¹, articulating a current in linguistic thought that is still very much alive at the present day. It is almost a hundred years since the first attempt at reviving the Coptic language, an attempt whose practical origins and intellectual roots still remain obscure. (Tuki and Bishai worked in Rome, but they had no non-Chalcedonian followers.) In this paper I should like to discuss local language pamphlets, in the chronological order of their appearance, with remarks on how the underlying concepts and attitudes they reveal might be corrected in order to effect respectable and workable programs for our own time.

In 1887, not long after Cyril IV had obtained from Leipzig the first Coptic printing press in Egypt, there appeared the **ΑΛΦΑΒΗΤΑΡΙΟΝ ΝΚΥΠΤΙΚΟC ΕΧΕΝ ΟΥΤΩΙ Γ ΜΒΕΡΙ (†CΥΓΓΡΑΦΗ)**, ‘Coptic alphabetarium upon a new path: the scriptures’, of one Naguib Mikhail. It was printed, in a large and heavy Bohairic typeface, by the Watan Press. The subtitle gives away its orientation: like that of the thirteenth-and fourteenth-century ‘preface’-writers, the intent of the book was to enable the devout to follow scripture readings. It contains Bible sentences, nomina sacra, lists of how to form compounds (e.g. abstract and agent nouns) and how to conjugate the First Perfect, and a few made-up ‘conversations’ on church topics. A sentence-book followed in 1889, **ΝΙΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΑ ΜΙΧΙΝΟΒ† ΞΕΙ†ΑCΠΙ ΝΚΥΠΤΙΚΗ**, ‘Preparatory exercises in the Coptic language’, by Barsum Ibrahim Raheb at the Patriarchal press. (Note the made-up Greek forms.)

In 1901 Claudius Labib, the self-taught would-be reviver of neo-Bohairic, produced his **ΠΙΧΙΝΘΩΛ ΝΡΕΜΙΧΗΜΙ ΕΒΟΛ Ι†ΑΦΕΝΡΑΤ, ΝΙΧΙΝCΑΧΙ ΝΕΜ ΝΙCΑΧΜΙ†**, ‘Complete (literally “head-to-foot”) explanation of Egyptian: pro-

verbs and sayings'. He was to issue this and his other publications, including a short-lived periodical, at his own press at Ain Shams ('On').² The work contains parsed sentences, using a strange and idiosyncratic repertoire of synthetic 'grammatical terms' (e.g. he was under the impression that a Coptic verb has only three principal parts). (The world eagerly awaits the publication of Ariel Shisha-Halevy's pioneer — and definitively exhaustive — work on Coptic grammatical categories. An authentic way of grasping the language of its own terms is a prime desideratum.) He followed this in 1902 with a short word-list, **ΠΙΛΝCΛΧΙ ΕΤCΩΡ ΕΒΟΛ**, 'Collection of sayings set forth', which gives French translations and a list of those favorite phenomena, words thought to be Coptic loanwords in Egyptian Arabic.

The 'phrasebook' trend was continued in the 1906 publication of Saadeh Wahbi, **ΠΙ2ΟΥΙΤ ΝΩΩ ΞΕΝ ΨΑCΠΙ ΝΚΠΤΙΚΗ** [*sic*], 'First sounds in the Coptic language'. It gives the usual alphabet (with the inescapable *gamma-for-gchain* and *janja* = *g* equivalences), syllables, possessive prefixes with nouns, numbers, the days of the week, months, and seasons. And in 1908 Labib brought the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century by publishing his two-volume set, **ΠΙΛΒΟΜΦΑΤ ΕΠCΠΗCΒΩ ΗΨΑCΠΙ ΝΠΕΜΝΧΗΜΙ**, 'Books of steps for teaching the Egyptian language', which are taken from *scalae* (Kircher and Paris). They consist, in *scala* fashion, of topical lists; ecclesiastical words, animals and plants, colors, trades, objects found in the house and the school; with conversational phrases added. Noteworthy is the first linguistic propaganda on pp. 74-75: 'Egyptian is the mother tongue of all languages. We speak it in our house all day long,' say the characters in the dialogue. (This is not an isolated claim: in the days of suppression of Catalan under Franco there was a popular humor book called 'Catalan, mother of all languages', featuring Catalan words that sounded like words in English, Chinese, Russian . . . The claim will reappear in Labib's publications.)

The Bible stories and paragraphs of apologetic at the end of Labib's 1908 second book led into the 1909 sequel, **ΠΙΜΑ2 Β ΝCΩΜ ΝΑΦΕΝΡΑΤ**, 'The second complete book.' It contains prose passages, Bible stories, some paradigms, and a vocabulary at the back. There is no real teaching procedure. And as indicated above, he came out in 1913-14 with a list of pretended European/English words that sound like 'Egyptian' or 'Coptic', e.g. "away" < **ΟΥΕΙ**, "vol" derived from **ΒΟΛ**. (Perhaps this was an exercise in humor.)²

Now, in the post-Assiut Congress period, the 'polymath' George Philotheus Awad produced his language book, **ΨΑCΠΙ ΗΡΕΜΝΧΗΜΙ**, 'The Egyptian language', in 1916. It is completely confessional in orientation, consisting of prose passages about the doings of patriarchs of the recent and medieval past, and lists of ecclesiastical words (which are of course mostly Greek. It is the case in all local Coptic pamphlets that no awareness of Greek words as Greek is ever shown. All are assumed to be simply Coptic. This consciousness remains today: one even hears 'it is Arabic word, *synaxarion*'). A revised edition of the above, **ΠΙ2ΟΥΙΤ ΝCΩΜ ΕΟΜΕΤΡΕ9ΨΑCΠΙ ΜΠΩΩ ΗΨΑCΠΙ ΝΚΥΠΤΙΚΗ**, 'First book for teaching the sound of the Coptic language', was issued by the Ahly press in 1922.

In Labib's last work, **ΠΙΣΟΥΙΤ ΝΤΩΤΕΡ ΝΝΙΣΩΜ ΝΤΕ ΠΙΑΒΩΜΦΑΤ
 ΝΤΑΧΠΙ ΝΡΕΜΝΧΗΜΙ**, 'First scala: books of the first steps of the Egyptian language', which appeared in 1926, he openly returned to his first source: the scala. It is the usual presentation of letters, syllables, supralinear marks, all in totally Arabicized phonology and without exercises. Bearing no printed date but also apparently dating from the late twenties or early thirties, we have from a monastic source and in the same typeface as was used in 1887, Fr Abd-el-Massih el-Baramusi's **†ΣΕΝ† ΕΤΤΑΧΡΗΟΥΤ ΞΕΝ ΠΑΜΟΝΙ ΝΤΧΙΝΣΑΧΙ ΝΤΑΧΠΙ
 ΝΤΕ ΝΙΡΕΜΝΧΗΜΙ**, 'Firm foundation for possessing (or: grasping) the speech of the Egyptian language'. It consists of vocabulary lists and prose paragraphs, and could not have been used for classroom instruction. And continuing this same sort of pattern, one Abd Shénuda produced in 1938 a pamphlet (the last to appear until after the War) called **†ΜΕΤΩΧ ΝΕΜ ΝΙΜΟΥΝΣΑΧΙ ΜΒΕΡΙ**, 'New reading and speaking'. It gives the alphabet, syllables, words, sentences, lists of things in the school and home; and on p. 27 a plug for 'our beloved language'.

In 1955 the Coptic Benevolent Association in Daher printed the first volume of **ΠΙΝΟΥΒ**, 'Gold', by the artisan Ayoub Farag. It presents Coptic words and sentences in somewhat graded fashion: paradigms and vocabulary lists are followed by sentences using the elements previously given. Also in this period, Murad Marcus Boulos produced 'Your language', a small brochure listing words and names — with Greek and Biblical names and forms indiscriminately mixed in — and adding a repertory of phrases: hello, Christ is risen, Long live Pope Cyril (1960).

The liturgical impetus was revived in 1964 with Munir Barsum's 'The Mass explained', i.e. a how-to guide for following the Anaphora of S. Basil. Every word in the Euchologion text is parsed and translated according to an idiosyncratic number system. The publishers, Arab World Press (!), succeeded in misprinting the initial invocation. Also in 1964 and after, the second and third volumes of Farag's *Pinoub* appeared, containing parsed sentences (nearly all Bible verses), paradigms, and hymns. The hymnological vein continued in the effusions of one Pisenti Risqallah, **ΞΑΝΟΥΕΛΛΕ ΝΧΩ ΜΒΕΡΙ**, 'New melodic songs', an effort at writing twentieth-century hymns (with vocabulary lists added).

In the difficult 1960's the S. Menas Society of Alexandria produced an Arabic translation of the *Grammaire copte* of Alexis Mallon, a book for teaching Bohairic only. There was no effort even to impart enough knowledge of Sahidic forms to make Bohairic intelligible, as in Steindorff's *Kurzer Abriss*. And very much in the old-fashioned vein there appeared Nashid Sarkis's 'Key to the Coptic language', with a picture alphabet, word lists, and (mostly ecclesiastical) sentences.

In 1969 appeared the first in Emil Maher's teaching series **ΣΑΧΙ ΝΕΜΑΝ**, 'Speak with us', a neo-Bohairic effort for the classroom. It presents easy sentences in syllabification, alphabetical vocabulary lists for each letter, compound formations, and paradigms for the First Present and First Future. The 'workbook' sentences are formulations for use in the church and home. In the same vein there

appeared at this time two books for children: a games and proverbs book, **ⲭⲉⲣⲭⲉⲣ ⲙⲟⲩ ⲓ**, with nostalgic Twenties illustrations; and as it were a manual of 'Basic', called 'A hundred pages for you', consisting of hand-drawn stick figures illustrating everyday objects and actions labelled with their neo-Bohairic equivalents. This seems to have been the first effort to coin neologisms for contemporary phenomena: a spoon, a light bulb, a hat . . . The calques are mostly Modern Greek or French. (I shall return to this approach below. After all, the Latin and Hebrew language academies have achieved conspicuous successes in this area).

A similar and much more comprehensive booklet — as usual, hand-drawn and lettered in the over-ornate, laborious neo-Bohairic hand — was produced in 1971 by a church lector, Emil Basili. Its pointed title is **ⲧⲁⲥⲛⲓ ⲛⲣⲉⲙⲓⲭⲙⲓ ⲉⲟⲩⲉ ⲛⲓⲣⲉⲙⲓⲭⲙⲓ**, 'The Egyptian language for Egyptians'. The 48 lessons contain, after alphabet and diacritics, a phrasebook: Good morning/evening, thank you, yes, no, happy feast day, very good (anything to avoid *kwais awi*), many years!, Christ is risen, I am the bread of life, blessed be Ancient Egypt. There are conversations illustrated by stick sketches: people eating bread, falafel, etc. Further sections cover Bible stories, household objects, telling time, situations in church and at home and meals, arithmetic and geography lessons, in the grocery store, and a song: 'Long live our land, Khemi'. There is even a crossword puzzle.

All of the above publications deal with, and present material in, Bohairic. This is self-defeating: rather like trying to learn fourteenth-century scholastic Latin without ever having seen a word of the classical forms from which all others come. The authors either were completely untrained or did not apply whatever training they may have received. Consulting the memorization of one's parish priest is neither adequate, professional, nor pedagogically effective. The time has come for a proper effort on proper scholarly foundations.

Fortunately, there is now a tool. The ideal teaching grammar: Thomas O. Lambdin's *Introduction to Sahidic Coptic* (Mercer University Press 1983). (And there is no need to translate Lambdin into Arabic: Coptic is not a Semitic language, and liberation from Semitic thought-patterns is vital.) Lambdin's book is ideally graded, and working through the exercises will enable the student to read nearly any text. If Lambdin can be supplemented with a twentieth-century Sahidic vocabulary for contemporary objects, from clothing to foodstuffs, from telephones to television to computers, the language can begin to be used in the home, school, shop and office. The creation of such a vocabulary must be the responsibility of a language academy, consisting of professionals trained at recognized institutions such as ICOR, Louvain, Yale, the Orientale at Rome. The fundamental linguistic research of Plotsky, Shisha-Halevy, Layton, and Funk (et al.) must be taken into account: any other approach is amateur and will be proven ineffective in practice. New grammars and dictionaries are being written and produced: their findings are to become part of the living language. (Again, contemporary parallels can be of use.) It is in this way that what Lucien Febvre called 'the intellectual tools of a society, the basic categories and rubrics of intellectual organization'³ can be clarified and put into millions of hands.

To attempt to define what are the unique qualities of the Coptic mind is primarily to study the Coptic language. To further the civilization that that mind has created is to put that language to work. We can profitably work along the lines suggested by research like T. Winograd's *Language as a cognitive process*. The structure of Coptic cognition is shaped by, and implicit in, the Coptic language⁴. As J. Gumperz has written, '... social identity and ethnicity are in large part established and maintained through language.' (J. Gumperz, ed., *Language and social identity* [Cambridge 1982] 7.) The entire work of Joshua Fishman reminds us that 'language is a signal of group identity' (*Language and nationalism* 141). Only on a professional basis can the amateur, uninformed, ecclesiastical efforts of the past, as outlined in this paper, be superseded by a correct and workable strategy that will once again articulate these unique cognitive structures and perceptions to enrich human lives today.⁵

Notes

1. Quoted in J. Fishman, *Language and nationalism* (Rowley, Mass., 1973) 1. An important book, especially the sections on language as 'a link with the glorious past' (overemphasized in the present case) and as 'a link with authenticity' (underemphasized). Remember that it was Maspero's lecture to a club in Cairo that sparked off the late nineteenth-century sense of Coptic identity.
2. His Bohairic-Arabic dictionary appeared in five parts between 1895 and 1915.
- 2a. Indians made the same sort of claim: cf. Fishman p. 54 with n. 20.
3. Quoted in N.S. Struever, 'The study of language and the study of history,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4 (1974) 404-405.
4. E.g. *ibid.* 412-413. Today's structuralism has made it clear how a language functions as the basis of a cultural whole — what Foucault has called 'the map of a coherence'.
5. The Irish patriot Thomas Davies wrote in 1845: 'To lose your native tongue, and learn that of an alien, is the worst badge of conquest — it is the chain on the soul.' (Quoted in Fishman p. 48.) Cf. P. Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics* (Harmondsworth 1974) p. 134: 'The attempted replacement of one language by another entails an effort . . . to obliterate whole cultures.' As Freeman Dyson has written in *Disturbing the Universe* (New York 1979): 'The smaller and more evanescent the minority, the more precious is their ancient language, the only weapon they have left with which to humble the conqueror's pride and maintain their own identity as a people' (p. 219).

— I am grateful to the Dumbarton Oaks and Institute of Christian Oriental Research libraries, as well as the Library of Congress (and Dr. Levon Avdoyan), for exploration opportunities in the field of this paper.

LEADING TO LIGHT: A CHRISTIAN READING OF A NAG HAMMADI TEXT

James E. Furman

Egypt and Christianity are not linked together in American thinking. Many associate religion in Egypt with little more than the Pyramids, offerings to the dead, gods honored in temples forested with columns. Others — with their eyes on contemporary headlines — understand religion in Egypt in terms of Islam, minarets and high-pitched calls to prayer.

These pictures are inaccurate because they are not complete. Egypt is part of the Christian heritage: it is a land of great saints, rich spirituality, distinctive Church tradition.

“Egyptian Christianity” is a phrase with meaning added by discoveries made immediately after World War II. As study of new material has continued, old interpretations have been re-worked. Egypt can no longer be dismissed as a remote theatre in which “side shows” are the only tenants. Rather, it is clear that early Christianity was as influenced by Egyptian factors as by its well-known relationship to Jewish Scripture, Roman forms, and Greek philosophy.

Study of “new material” especially refers to the “Nag Hammadi finds.” In 1945 a large collection of diverse writings was discovered at Nag Hammadi, a city in Upper Egypt. A farmer seeking fertilizer found sealed jars hidden under the edge of a huge boulder in a desolate canyon. Smashing one of the jars, he confirmed that it contained books rather than gold or jewels. Later, some of the books were burned. The surviving “library” was sent to Cairo although one significant codex journeyed to Switzerland. Translation and publication of the collection was delayed until the 1970’s by scholarly politics and international tensions.

Concealed since the late Fourth Century, the Nag Hammadi material represents many authors and a range of views. It is, however, united by a theme of world-renunciation and religious speculation. It is these common features that made each writing in some way valuable to the monastics who assembled the collection.

The Nag Hammadi literature functions as the Christian equivalent of the Dead Sea scrolls, opening an unsuspected window that enables us to see more of the early Church horizon.

Rather than attempt to survey the entire Nag Hammadi range of fifty-two works in twelve volumes, I have selected one document for analysis. It is not typical of the collection in many ways. It does, however, represent the over-all Nag Hammadi tendency and flavor, presenting teachings in a style that leads to meditation and reflection.

"A diamond in the dust" describes *"The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles"*¹; a charming Christian "romance" included in an assortment of much that is grotesque and bizarre. That is, "Peter and the Twelve" is a striking exception to the rule that material discovered at Nag Hammadi is either Gnostic or non-Christian. "Peter and the Twelve" presents the Gospel message as interpreted by a segment of Second Century orthodoxy.

The opening passages of "Peter and the Twelve" are fragmentary. However, it is clear that the characters of the story are "apostles" appointed to ministry by the Lord, sharing a "covenant with each other."

The first act is a brisk description of divine Providence in action. "We went down to the sea at an opportune moment, which came to us from the Lord. We found a ship moored at the shore ready to embark . . ." Although the situation is fanciful, one is certainly dealing with an illustration of the concept that "even the wind and the sea obey him" (St. Mark 4:41).

When journey's-end is reached, the apostles approach "Habitation," a name rich in Biblical suggestion. One senses the abiding-place of God's glory, a kind of Jerusalem in the midst of the sea. Despite breaks in the text, details survive to indicate that Habitation is no ordinary place. It is associated with "endurance" and its leader carries a palm branch, emblem of spiritual victory.

As the apostles enter the city, they meet an imposing man "wearing a cloth bound around his waist, and a gold belt . . ." The man's garments both conceal and reveal his body. Strikingly, that which is uncovered corresponds to the wounds of the Crucified: "the tops of his feet, and a part of his chest, and the palm of his hand, and his visage." The text does not suggest that nail prints or spear stabs were visible. Rather, one has the impression of a significant clue being provided, something moving the story forward to more profound "seeing" and inter-acting.

When the stranger speaks, he has a resounding voice and a brief message: "Pearls! Pearls!" The term "pearl" is both a term used in a variety of ancient non-orthodox texts and an image present in the New Testament itself: St. Matthew 7:16 (pearls cast before swine) and St. Matthew 13:45-46 (the "pearl of great price").

Peter talks with the "pearl-seller" and discovers that he is not a merchant. Rather, he is one who offers opportunity to have pearls as gifts, a gesture so extraordinary that it is scorned by the leading citizens of Habitation. As one watches the miniature stage of "Peter and the Twelve", it fills with the dramatic mystery of Israel's rejection of the Messiah. "And they did not see that they could gain anything from him, because there was no pouch on his back, nor bundle inside his cloth and napkin. And because of their disdain they did not even acknowledge him." Reading this, one

hears again St. John's summary comment: "He entered his own realm and his own would not receive him" (1:11).

In this section, Peter uses the expression "My brother and my friend." Can this have a Christological sense? Certainly, it appreciates the human relationship of man to man while sensing the presence of something larger and more imperative. In any case, the clue may be the word "friend" and its suggestion of St. John 15:15-16.

Peter is assured that "I also am a fellow stranger like you." Here the mood seems to be that of being in the world but not of it as in St. John 15:18-19.

As the story advances, the poor of the city respond to the voice and come to make a request: "We beseech you to show us a pearl . . . allow us to say to our friends that we saw a pearl with our own eyes." The answer is direct and generous: "If it is possible, come to my city, so that I may not only show it before your very eyes, but give it to you for nothing."

In this gospel preached to the poor, at least two themes seem present. The first is New Testament challenge: "Come, follow me" — if it is possible for you to separate yourselves from those things which have lesser claims than the call of God. The second is that of Old Testament fulfillment as expressed in Christ's response to messengers sent from St. John the Baptist: ". . . the poor are hearing the good news — and happy is the man who does not find me a stumbling block" (St. Matthew 11:5-6).

They humble who know their need act out the truth of the Beatitudes in contrast to the wealthy and established. As the author of "Peter and the Twelve" puts it, "the poor and the beggars rejoiced because of the man who gives for nothing."

Partial revelation comes when the stranger says "If you seek my name, Lithargoel is my name, the interpretation of which is, the light, gazelle-like stone." This name may point to Revelation 2:17 with the implication that Christ is like the Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament in that he declares the will of God. Perhaps a second motif is also present. Is it possible that the phrase "gazelle-like" points to an episode presented in Acts 9:36-43? If so, the association would be a scene of resurrection, a person lifted up from death through the power of God. Thus the name Lithargoel would be another way of saying "This is the Lord of Hope and Life."

Lithargoel/Christ now introduces a beautifully phrased description of the ascetic way, the life of pilgrimage. ". . . concerning the road to the city . . . No man is able to go on that road, except one who has forsaken everything that he has and has fasted daily from stage to stage. For many are the robbers and wild beasts on that road. The one who carries bread with him on the road, the black dogs kill because of the bread. The one who carries a costly garment of the world with him, the robbers kill because of the garment. The one who carries water with him, the wolves kill because of the water, since they were thirsty for it. The one who is anxious about meat and green vegetables, the lions eat because of the meat. If he evades the lions, the bulls devour him because of the green vegetables." Thus the familiar ascetic ideals of Egyptian monasticism are expressed in graphic form.

Hearing these words, the narrator is overwhelmed by God's demands and is moved to prayer: ". . . I sighed within myself . . . If only Jesus would give us power . . ." A motif of sighing in despair and prayer leads to the assurance that Jesus "is a great power for giving strength. For I too believe in the Father who sent him." This seems to be another "Christological pronouncement," a reminiscence of both St. John 5:19-37 and St. John 14:1-14.

"Power" is used throughout the New Testament. Its two most common forms are "dunamis" (ability) and "exousia" (authority). This passage in "Peter and the Twelve" may relate to the famous description of Christ as both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:24).

When asked the name of his city, Lithargoel/Christ replies "Nine Gates." He adds that "the tenth is the head." The name "Nine Gates" contrasts with "Hundred-gated Thebes" and pharaonic traditions of grandeur yet it points to God's provision of the entrance that is supremely important: "I am the door; anyone who comes into the fold through me shall be safe" (St. John 10:9).

Themes introduced earlier return for more extended development (6:30-7:19). There is meditation on endurance which suggests both the Gospel (e.g. St. Matthew 10:22) and Revelation ("apostasies and difficulties of the storms" paralleling Revelation 2). The reward of the Way of Discipline is stated in a long section (7:20-8:10). Tranquility abounds: "A great joy came upon us and a peaceful carefreeness like that of our Lord. We rested ourselves in front of the gate, and we talked with each other about that which is not a distraction of this world. Rather we continued in contemplation of the faith."

Having left Peter and the others, Lithargoel/Christ returns in what seems to be a parallel of St. Luke's Emmaus road narrative (24:13-32). A most interesting passage follows in which a sacramental theme seems to be introduced.

The new material is associated with a picture. "He had the appearance of a physician, since an unguent box was under his arm, and a young disciple was following him, carrying a pouch of medicine."

The unguent box suggests "the oil of salvation," some ritual of solemn chrismation. The Valentinian "Gospel of Philip" found at Nag Hammadi may help us to see the force of this passage. In the world in which "Peter and the Twelve" circulated an influential body of opinion ranked chrismation above water baptism, linking the usual gifts of the Spirit given in baptism with an anointing which made the recipient a "Christ". Apart from this, the pouch of medicine is also important, suggesting the range of sacraments available to the initiated or, simply the Eucharist itself, "the drug of immortality."

Lithargoel/Christ then departs and returns in a way suggestive of St. John 7:33-34 and St. John 16:16-24. Indeed, from this point on, Christ speaks "in plain words." Moreover, the characters of "Peter and the Twelve" also begin to sound like the Fourth Gospel: "We are certain now that you know everything, and do not need to be questioned; because of this we believe that you have come from God" (St. John

16:30). My point is that here and elsewhere the author of "Peter and the Twelve" says much through what he "echoes," teaching through allusion and reference.

Noting that Christ "came back quickly," "Peter and the Twelve" presents a scene in which the Risen One shares wisdom. The material that comes next evokes yet another Gospel passage: St. John 1:47-51. Dialogue representing the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi follows a change of garment which suggests some of the mood of I Corinthians 15:53-54.

The unguent box and the medicine pouch now receive great emphasis. They seem to be the sources from which the apostles are to draw that which is offered by Christ. "To the poor of that city give what they need in order to live . . ."

At this point, Peter seems to become afraid. He suggests that neither he nor the others have the resources to carry out the Lord's commands. St. Matthew 19:27-30 may have made this seem a suitably "Petrine concern." In his response to Peter, Christ seems to speak with direct reference to Acts 3:6, a situation in which Peter is secure in his faith. The episode closes with transference of the pouch. Words of authorization are then used: "Heal all of the sick of the city who believe in my name."

"Peter and the Twelve" closes with further dialogue. Beginning with a contrast between spirit and flesh that is very "Johannine," the narrator moves to comments recalling James 2:1-7.

I see "Peter and the Twelve" as the product of a pious author summing up Gospel themes in a brief, colorful document. If this judgment is correct, "Peter and the Twelve" is something more than just another tract recovered from dusty antiquity. I suggest that "Peter and the Twelve" is a masterpiece of Coptic creativity, a spiritual treasure of light that gently leads forward to the greater light of the canonical Scripture — no little achievement for a book found on a Gnostic shelf!²

Notes

1. D. M. Parrott, R. McL. Wilson, pp. 265-270, *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. J. M. Robinson, 1977.
2. Biblical quotations in this article are taken from *The New English Bible*.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Churches the Apostles Left Behind

By Raymond E. Brown, S.S. New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984. Pp. 156. Cloth, \$8.95. Paper, \$4.95.

Raymond Brown is one of the most distinguished Roman Catholic biblical scholars. He is the editor of *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* and the author of about twenty books, including the monumental commentaries on the Gospel and the Epistles of St. John in the *Anchor Bible* series. In this book Father Brown studies seven different churches in the Sub-Apostolic Period (the last one-third of the first century), as detected from the biblical writings addressed to them. These writings have diverse emphases concerning ecclesiastic situations which complete each other, however contradictory they may appear. The *Pastoral Epistles* (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus) emphasize the importance of Church structure and the authority of the bishop. The Epistles to the *Colossians* and *Ephesians* describe the Church as Christ's Body. *Luke* and *Acts* have a vision of a Spirit-guided organized church. *I Peter* describes the Church as the People of God and speaks of general "royal priesthood" (2:9), without ignoring the Holy Orders (5:1). From a different angle we find that the core of the ecclesiology in the *Fourth Gospel* is discipleship, a personal relation to Christ, a status that all Christians enjoy; and within that status what confers dignity is the love of Jesus. We learn from John that in addition to providing doctrine and pastoral care, liturgy and sacraments and a supportive sense of belonging to a caring community, a church must bring people into some personal contact with Jesus (the lesson of the Vine and the branches.); the Church must never replace the unique role of Jesus in the life of Christians. The *Epistles of John* describe a community of individuals guided by the Paraclete-Spirit. Taken alone, without the teaching authority and structure in the Church stressed in other New Testament writings, this would lead to uncontrollable divisions. On the other hand, adherence to law and Church authority carries the dangers of legalism, authoritarianism and a type of clericalism. The Gospel of Matthew seeks to protect against these dangers by insisting that the voice of Jesus must not be stifled in the Church. It stresses the continued presence of Christ in the Church (28:20). It insists that the Church should rule not only in the name of Jesus, but also in His spirit and by His teaching and His commandments.

Using his scriptural knowledge and his ecumenical background Father Brown has succeeded in throwing light on various problems in the Church life today and he concludes by warning the various churches that have accepted the canon of the Bible against allowing their preferences to silence any biblical voice.

The Mystery of the Eucharist

An Ecumenical Approach

By Max Thurian. Translated by Emily Chisholm. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984. Pp. 83. Paper, \$4.95.

The last two decades have witnessed astonishing changes in the eucharistic liturgies and practices in the Roman Catholic Church and in various Protestant Churches, changes which have drawn Christians much closer together. Looking at the Eucharist from its different aspects, through the traditional teachings of the early Church Fathers, the ancient liturgies, and even the teachings of the early Reformers, Luther and Calvin, Max Thurian (who is a member of the Protestant community of Taizé' in France) reaches basic points for an ecumenical doctrine.

Starting with the biblical word *memorial (anamnesis)*, which is central in the profound significance of the Eucharist, he says, "The memorial is no more subjective memory; it is a liturgical gesture, making actual an event in the history of salvation in and for the Church, and it is, at the same time, a liturgical action through which the Church presents to the Father Christ's unique sacrifice, as her offering of thanksgiving and intercession." As a sacrifice of *praise and thanksgiving*, the Eucharist recalls the marvels wrought by God in the order of creation and the order of redemption. But the Eucharist is more than a sacrifice of praises, it is the liturgical presentation of the *sacrifice* of the Cross which is eternally actual. By herself, the Church can offer nothing but her wretchedness to God, but in Christ, she can offer a true sacrifice, for she is able to present the sacrifice of the Cross to the Father. She presents the Body of Christ and she presents herself as the Body of Christ. This sacrifice is possible for the Church because Christ Himself presents and offers it. Through this sacrifice the Church is introduced into the eternal *intercession* of Christ crucified and risen again. Historically, He lived this intercession once and for all on the Cross, and He continues to live it eternally in glory and sacramentally in His Body, which is the Church. United with the intercession of Christ, the Church prays for the glorious manifestation of the Kingdom beseeching the Father for all creation.

About half the book deals with the Eucharist as a *Real and Living Presence* of Christ. The author traces the different conceptions of the real presence in the Sacrament since the earliest centuries. The Church has always given a realistic meaning to the words of Christ, "This is my body . . . This cup is the new Covenant in my blood . . ." (I Cor. 11:24, 25). The first Christians received the words of Christ simp-

ly without attempting to find a rational explanation (*The literalist conception*). This soon called forth the *metabolist conception*. A change (metabole) takes place during the celebration of the Eucharist where the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. The transformation takes place during the eucharistic prayer as a whole, which includes the words of Christ at the institution of the Last Supper and an invocation of the Holy Spirit or of the Word (Epiclesis). At the same time the Fathers had the *sacramental conception*. While the Eucharist is the true Body and Blood of Christ, these are received under the external signs of bread and wine. While the Fathers never denied the real living presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Middle Ages brought the *substantialist conception* to explain and moderate a *realistic conception* that was accused of being too carnal. From this historical background the author offers the basic points for an ecumenical doctrine, "Under the outward signs of the eucharistic species, the Body of the Risen Christ is present truly, really and substantially. This presence is true, it is not a purely symbolic figure; this presence is real, it is not merely subjective imagination; this presence is substantial: it is tied up with the profound reality of the signs of the bread and of the wine."

The last chapter of the book deals with the invocation of the Spirit upon the Eucharist (*the Epiclesis*). In 1936 Evelyn Underhill wrote, "In all ancient liturgies, and still in the Orthodox and other Eastern rites, the Eucharistic prayer ends with a solemn invocation of the Holy Spirit on the worshipers and their oblation, the Epiclesis . . . ; it is a serious defect of the Roman Mass and the rites derived from it that here the direct invocation of the Holy Spirit, and with it the ancient Trinitarian pattern of the Eucharistic prayer, has been lost."¹ At that time Western liturgists considered the Epiclesis an Eastern confusion and innovation.² Nothing short of a miracle could have changed this in such a short time. The present book includes not only a collection of early liturgies (Apostolic Tradition, Apostolic Constitution, Euchlogion of Serapion, Fragment of Der-Balyzeh, and Anaphoras of St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom and Addai and Mari) where the epiclesis was in place, but also of the present day liturgies in the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, and Calvinist Churches where the epiclesis has been replaced in the eucharistic prayer.

We highly recommend this book to Christians of all denominations. It deals with theological matters and leads the reader to a deeper perception and understanding of the Eucharist and to a more profound liturgical life, yet its style is simple and direct.

Notes

1. Evelyn Underhill: *Worship*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936. P. 135, 136.
2. Gregory Dix: *Shape of the Liturgy*. London, 1945. Pp. 281, 292.

Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke***By Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria.****Translated by R. Payne Smith. Astoria, New York: Studion Publishers. (P.O. Box 2007, Astoria, NY, 11102), 1983. Pp. 620. Hardcover, \$34.95.*

Saint Cyril the Great, the twenty fourth Patriarch of Alexandria (412-444 A.D.) was one of the strongest characters and prominent figures who led the Church and defined its faith in the first half of the fifth century. He is called the 'Pillar of Faith' in the East and is considered a Doctor of the Church in the West. In 431 he presided over the third Ecumenical Council which deposed Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople. St. Cyril defended the true christological teaching of the Church against serious doctrinal, political and personal opposition. As an outstanding Church Father and theologian, he is considered next only to St. Athanasius and St. Augustine.

St. Cyril of Alexandria was a prolific writer. His extant works in Greek fill ten volumes of Migne's monumental Patristic library, *Patrologia Graeca* (M.G. 68-77). A great part of his writings has been lost; some still persist in Syriac, Armenian, Ethiopian and Arabic manuscripts. However, nothing of Cyril's work is easily accessible in English. Some of his commentaries, dogmatic works and letters were translated in the nineteenth century, but have been long out-of-print. The three great English libraries of the Fathers, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, *Ancient Christian Writers* and *The Fathers of the Church* have not yet published any volume for St. Cyril.

By publishing this new and beautiful edition of Saint Cyril's Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke, Studion Publishers have done a great service to the English reader. The present book is handsomely printed in a classic design, illustrated by iconographic drawings and introduced by Father Georges Florovsky's classical article, *The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church*, and by a biographical sketch of Saint Cyril that includes a list of his writings.

The Commentary on Luke is not a verse by verse interpretation, but a series of homilies. Only three homilies are extant in Greek. A Syriac version of 156 homilies was discovered in the last century among manuscripts obtained from Egypt and published by Payne Smith (Oxford, 1858). In preparing the Syriac version, Payne Smith was aware that his labors would be of little practical benefit, unless he made the commentary accessible to theologians by means of an English translation. He undertook the impossible task of translating, comparing with the Greek text when available, and writing a critical introduction and scholarly notes on the text. The translation appeared the following year (Oxford, 1859).

Biblical exegesis was the major theological activity of St. Cyril; exegetical works fill two thirds of the ten volumes in Migne. For Cyril, like the rest of the Alexandrian school, the text of Scripture is interpreted in two senses, the literal and the spiritual. In these homilies he stresses the practical and ethical teaching and the im-

itation of Christ and union with Him. But theological truths are not ignored and in the life, baptism, temptation, suffering and death of Christ, Cyril follows the 'economy' of salvation. With the Nestorian controversy in mind (the homilies were written c. 430 A.D.), he always speaks about the one Christ, while doing justice to His full divinity and His full humanity.

Faith and Practice in the Early Church: Foundations for Contemporary Theology

By Carl A. Volz. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983. Pp. 223. \$9.95 (Paperback).

In this book, Carl Volz, who is professor of early Church History at Luther North western Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, summarizes the teachings and describes the life of the early Church. In the first three chapters he outlines the Christian theology as taught by the Fathers and defined by the Ecumenical Councils. Chapter 1 deals with *The Doctrine of God*, discussing monotheism, the divinity and humanity of Christ and the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 2 deals with *The Doctrine of Humanity* especially with the problem of sin and the human fall. In Chapter 3 which deals with *The Doctrine of Salvation*, the author follows the early Fathers in their understanding of the salvation brought by Christ. Christ has been described as teacher, mediator, victor, sacrifice, and giver of deification.

The last three chapters of the book describe different aspects of the Church life; specifically its liturgical life, authority in it and its relation to society. Baptism and the Eucharist were central in the life of the early Christians. Authority was a complex interplay of personalities, institutions and literature. These include both the Old and New Testaments, the liturgical tradition, writing of the Fathers, Creeds and rules of faith, Church councils and bishops as successors of the Apostles. The final chapter on *The Church and Society* deals with Christian ethics, marriage and family life, and the relation between Church and state.

The book is solid, and reliable as a small reference for the various subjects it deals with and its frequent quotations from the Fathers are concise, well chosen and to the point. At this period in history where all churches are searching for the Christian roots in the ancient Church, the book offers the readers an oversight of the patristic foundations for both theology and worship. It succeeds in showing the interdependence among the Church teachings and the Christian life; creeds grow out of Christian experience and worship, and the Fathers who participated in the early councils were interested in pastoral care rather than theological arguments.

However, although the author was honest and mostly successful in giving the orthodox teachings in the early church, yet he misrepresented the teaching of the Alexandrian Fathers concerning the nature of Christ and accused them of pressing His divinity over His humanity. He even thought that Eutyches, the heretic (of Constantinople) was an Alexandrian.

BOOKS RECEIVED

BAPTISM AND EUCHARIST: ECUMENICAL CONVERGENCE IN CELEBRATION - Edited by Max Thurian and Geoffrey Wainwright. Geneva: World Council of Churches; Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. W. Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. 285. Paper, \$11.95.

A wide selection of full texts of liturgies of Baptism and of the Eucharist, including liturgies from the Early Church, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Churches.

THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH - By Father Cyril, OAR. Tajique, New Mexico: St. Mihael's Forest Valley Priory, 1984. Pp. 26 Paper, \$2.00.

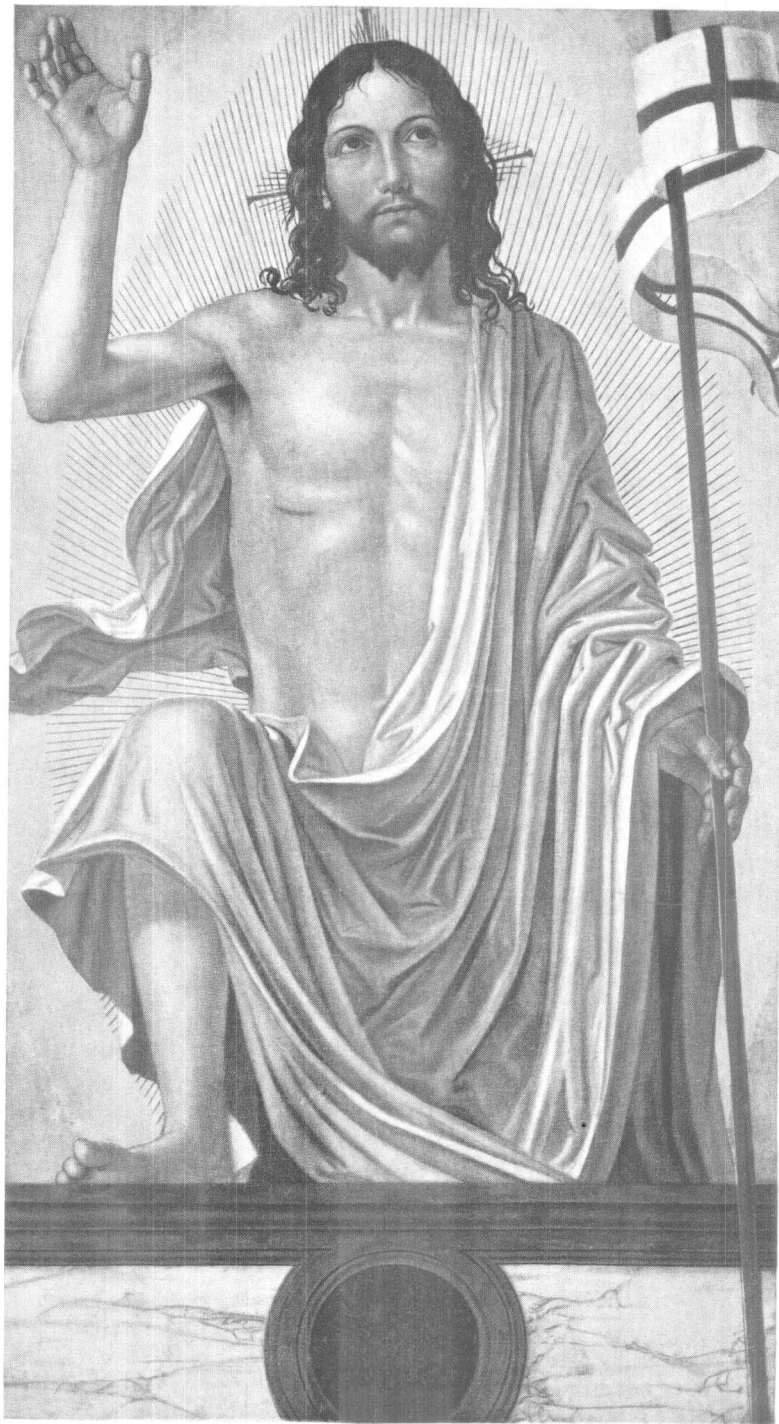
An outline of the history and liturgical practices of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, including a list of its archbishops (or Abunas) and a chronological table of all Ethiopian rulers and important Christian events since the first century.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION - By Jurgen Moltmann and Johann Baptist Metz. Translated by Edmund Colledge. Ramsey/New York: Paulist Press, 1979. Pp. 39. Paper, \$1.75.

Meditations on the words of Christ that proclaimed His Passion for the first time (Mark 8:31-38), with emphasis on conquering suffering by accepting it and bearing it rather than unloading it upon others, and on imitating and following the Son of Man by giving ear to the groans of the nameless sufferers of humanity.

COPING WITH A GENTLE GOD - By John Powers, C. P. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1984. Pp. 140. Paper, \$5.95.

How to cope with the stresses and conflicts of everyday life and live with peace through the hope of the loving God.



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