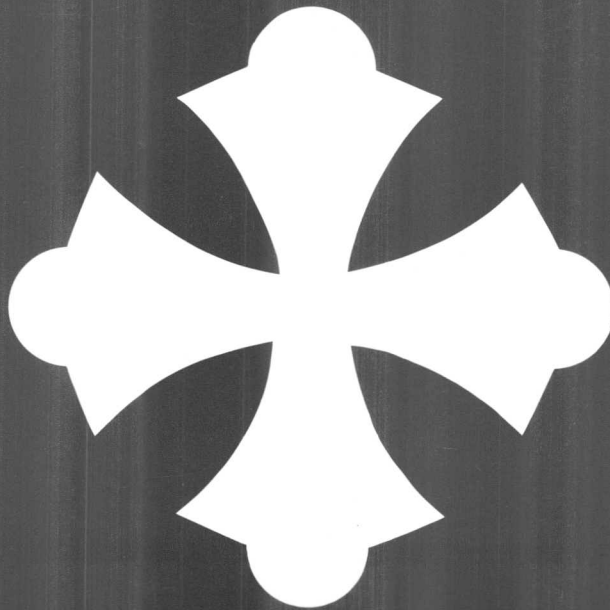


# COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 7, Number 2 ..... Summer 1986

- *ARREST OF CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT*
- *SAINT BASIL THE GREAT*
- *POSITION OF ORIGEN IN THE COPTIC CHURCH*



*Society of Coptic Church Studies*

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## ***ABOUT THIS ISSUE***

### ***The Silent Persecution***

Certainly there is no bombing of churches or killing of Christians in the streets by Moslem extremists, no presidential orders to put bishops and priests in prison, no official banning of church publications or meetings. These were highlights of the Sadat days which had their climax in his September 1981 decrees against the Coptic Church, one month before his assassination by Moslem extremists in the army. However, Christianity has been facing, under the new Egyptian regime, a slow but deadly persecution, the kind of which it had not suffered for centuries.

The release of Pope Shenouda III on January 1, 1985 from his imprisonment at the Monastery of St. Bishoi and his return to power as head and leader of the Church have proved to be a fake. Now he is practically under house arrest in the Coptic Patriarchate in Ciaro. He is not allowed to conduct pastoral visits to other churches in Cairo. He never visited Alexandria, the site of his original See (Before 1981 he used to go to Alexandria every week). Except for the great feasts, he has not been allowed to conduct services in his cathedral. His Friday sermon (attended by 7000 persons) and his weekly periodical *Al-Kirazah* never came back. His ecumenical activities are at a standstill. The only place he visits frequently and freely is the desert monastery of St. Bishoi where he had spent his four years of imprisonment.

Worse still, the ecclesiastical authority of Pope Shenouda has been greatly eroded. The ordination of bishops and priests is limited with the result that many important dioceses in Upper Egypt are vacant and many churches lack priests. Not a single new priest has been sent to North America. In the US alone there are now twenty churches without priests.

Since President Mubarak came to power in 1981 he did not issue a single presidential permit for building any new Coptic church. (Normally you need a presidential permit to build a church in Egypt!) Restoration of old, or falling churches is prohibited.

The clergy is humiliated and silenced. The eight bishops who were imprisoned for no reason in 1981 and 1982 have been slowly allowed to return to their dioceses, the last two of them only a few months ago. One of these, ***Anba Poemen of Mallawi***, a young, highly-educated, courageous and pious bishop, died on May 19, 1986. His health had deteriorated in prison, and he continued a downhill course after his release. Of twenty-four priests put in prison by Sadat, no one has been allowed

back to his church. The Coptic clergy have their mouths shut, both in Egypt and overseas, while the Church is slowly strangled to death.

In this issue of the *Journal* we have the *Amnesty International* recent report concerning a new era of persecution against the Protestant community in Cairo, beginning by the arrest of four members of Kasr-el-Dubarah Coptic Evangelical Church which is the largest Protestant Church in the Middle East.

### ***Monasticism and Spiritual Life.***

Is there a difference between monastic spirituality and Christian spirituality in general? *Father Tadros Malaty*, the member of our editorial board, addresses himself to this question in the article ***Monasticism and Spiritual Life***. The article is translated from the Introduction of Father Malaty's *Dictionary of the Fathers and Saints of the Coptic Church* (under preparation in Arabic).

### ***Saint Basil the Great***

*Defender of the Spirit* is the second in a series of articles on the *Cappadocian Fathers*. Here, *the Rev. James E. Furman* introduces *Saint Basil the Great* - his life, liturgy and writings. Saint Basil has a special place in the Coptic Orthodox Church, superseding even most of the Coptic Fathers. The liturgy of St. Basil is the most commonly used liturgy in the Coptic Church throughout the year, and it is known fact among liturgical scholars that the Copts have kept this liturgy in its most original form. The Canons of St. Basil have been translated into Arabic and included among the Church Canons by Coptic theologians in the thirteenth century. The Feast Day of St. Basil in the Coptic Church is Tubah 6 (January 14).

### ***Origen . . . and the 1986 NAPS Conference***

*The Position of Origen in the Egyptian Church: A Historical Perspective* was one of the papers scheduled to be presented at the fourth North American Patristic Society Conference. However, the sudden illness of the author prevented him from reading it at the conference. The conference which was held on May 15-17, 1986 at the Lakeshore Campus of Loyola University of Chicago, contained 16 sessions, with several papers on Origen, Coptic and Syriac Christianity and special studies on many Fathers including St. Ignatius, St. Irenaeus, St. Ephraem and St. Augustine.

*Editor*

# ***ARREST OF CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT***

***Amnesty International Report, March 18, 1986***

Amnesty International is concerned by reports it has received of the arrest of four converts from Islam to Christianity in Cairo in January 1986. The organization believes that the detainees may be prisoners of conscience, detained for practising the Christian religion.

Eman Mustafa Tawfiq, a Christian woman who converted from Islam in 1978, was reportedly arrested by police in Cairo on 8 January 1986. She is currently being held in Qalyubia Prison together with her two sisters, Nagwa Mustafa Tawfiq and Ibtisam Mustafa Tawfiq, who were arrested on 25 January 1986. A fourth convert to Christianity, Dr. Samir Abdul Bari, the husband of Ibtisam Tawfiq, was also detained on 25 January 1986. According to latest reports he is being held in Tora Prison. However, after damage to the prison during recent civil unrest in Egypt, Dr. Abdul Bari's place of detention is uncertain.

The four Christians are reportedly accused of "despising Islam". Eman Mustafa Tawfiq is reportedly to face an additional charge of "proselytizing and division of national unity". Amnesty International has sought further information from the Egyptian authorities about the precise charges to be brought against the four detainees.

The detainees are members of the Coptic Evangelical Church, the largest church in the small Egyptian protestant community of about 200,000. Egypt has a substantial Christian minority of 6-10 million, most of whom belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Amnesty International is concerned that the Egyptian authorities should comply with the relevant international standards to which it is party, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Egypt in 1982. Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states:

"Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching."

Amnesty International believes that the detainees may be prisoners of conscience, detained for practicing the Christian faith. If this is the case, then Amnesty International urges the Egyptian authorities to release the four detainees immediately. If not, then Amnesty International seeks assurances that the detainees are being humanly treated, and that they have access to defense counsel of their own choice, and will be promptly charged and tried or else released. The organization would welcome information from the Egyptian authorities on the charges which are to be brought against the detainees, the proposed date and place of their trial, and the offences they are alleged to have committed.

# ***MONASTICISM AND SPIRITUAL LIFE***

***Father Tadros Y. Malaty***

Some erroneously think that monasticism and sanctity are one and the same thing. Monasticism is a virtuous path if a person pursues it spiritually and wisely, while sanctity is a gift of God to all believers who are actually true to their faith whether they be monks or married. In reality, monastic life is not different from the christian life in general. Monks and nuns are not a segment of society separate from the circle of the faithful. Monastic life is a true evangelical life, or it is the practice of the christian life which every believer should lead, wherever he may be, whatever his position in church or society may be, and whatever his circumstances may be. Monastic life is a better climate where the gospel which is offered to all, can be enjoyed.

## ***Hagiography:***

Biographies of the saints, especially the monks, are incomplete and do not disclose the whole truth. They only touch on some and not all aspects, because of many reasons:

*First:* Monks in general, and Egyptian monks in particular tended to hide their virtues and bring out vices most of which they did not actually possess. St. John Cassian, who lived almost nine years in the Egyptian monastic environment, was astonished at this unique tendency and recorded it in his writings explaining that the monks sought eternal glory and not the vain earthly glory.

*Secondly:* The main discipline in monastic life and in christian life in general is silence, not meaning to refrain from talking, but experiencing and enjoying a hidden relationship with God that no one else can understand — it is the secret of the hidden relationship between God and the soul. It is the obscurity of this spiritual life-giving discipline that makes our discussion of the saints incomplete. Thus, the essence of the saint's life remains an inner life which he does not reveal to others. This may be what the Great St. Antony experienced when he declared that a monk is like a fish when removed from water, he dies if he leaves his cell. By cell here, St. Antony did not mean the literal sense of the word, because he used to go out and mingle with philosophers and crowds of believers. He even went to Alexandria more than once to strengthen the confessors of the faith in their time of struggle, and to aid the Patriarch, St. Athanasius the Apostolic, in his strive against the Arians . . . But

he remained within the cell of his heart with his own hidden life the secrets of which he revealed to no other person. In the same spirit, when Pope Theophilus the Alexandrian visited the monks of Scete, he asked Abba Pambo for a word of benefit. The latter kept his silence, and when the monks urged him to say something for the sake of the Patriarch, he said, "If he did not benefit by my silence, neither will he benefit from my words." St. Nil, Bishop of Ancyra, also says, "As murky waters can never become clear so long as there is continuous motion, so also it is impossible to be a monk without silence."

We can come to the conclusion that what was recorded about our Fathers does not reflect the whole truth because their inner life was never revealed to anyone. What has reached us concerning them is the observation of those around them whether they were disciples, colleagues or visitors. In other words, only the record of their external behavior reached us; their deep inner self is hidden.

*Thirdly:* It should be stressed here that what is recorded in the lives of the Fathers, is for the most part truthful and precise; but it appears to be incomplete because the observer recorded what he considered uncommon. For example: the Apophthegmata Patrum concentrates on ascetic disciplines but does not stress much the reading of the Holy Bible, because the latter is normal for any Christian and does not need recording. In other words, the Apophthegmata, inspite of its great significance in revealing some aspects of monastic life, should be read against the background of the ordinary christian life of the time which was not recorded by the observers and writers about monasticism.

We wish to stress the fact that most of what is recorded deals with the high spiritual standards attained by the Fathers without any reference to the details of their earlier lives and their struggle of many years.

### ***Monasticism and Holy Orders:***

Monasticism, in all its forms, anchoritism, cenobitism, and collective eremitism is not a clerical movement, but rather it is a movement of the people. People resorted to it not to acquire positions of leadership in the church, but rather to be able to live in Christian life on an angelic level, in better circumstances, by dedicating all the time a person can, to worship and practice the life of the Gospel in greater depths.

### ***Monasticism and Ascetic Discipline***

In reading about the lives of the ascetic monks and the anchorites. We learn about a long strife in a life of austere discipline to the extent that some of them experienced a level that transcended the basics of nature, for example, fasting for whole days with no food or drink, or staying up for nights in a row, in worship and prayer. What then does this mean?

*First:* In their struggle they did not purposely enter into a contest or race in asceticism for its own sake, but through discipline of the flesh they longed to let the soul enjoy as much as it can its life in God. Asceticism, in its negative aspect,



deprives the body of its pleasures, but in its positive aspect, it drills the soul to turn towards the heavenly. Many of the Fathers did not aim through asceticism at reaching a certain level of deprivation of the flesh, but with the rising soul, the body often forgets its needs even the mere necessities. Of this, we have a slight experience in our daily life: when a person is engaged in something that gives him joy, he tends to forget to eat, drink or sleep, and sometimes he even loses track of time and a day or two may go by during which time he is unaware of whether or not he has had anything to eat.

I shall give an actual contemporary example of this:

When Father Abdel-Messih the Ethiopian<sup>1</sup> wished to offer a delicious meal in an act of love to one of the monks (presently a Bishop) he brought an unwashed empty food can, filled it with water and lit a fire under it. He then added dried herbs and halva, thinking this was a savory meal and great hospitality . . . He did not call this asceticism. Because of his long Spirit-fired life, food and taste no longer had any relativity. Thus, what we may consider as unpalatable food, he may consider as a luxury and a delicacy.

At another time, I watched him when one of the monks of the monastery of Our Lady, Al-Syrian, tried to be hospitable and offered him a cup of tea before his departure. He added water and salt several times to the tea, then he drank as though he had allowed himself, for the sake of love, to drink that delicious drink!!!

*Secondly:* If spiritual acts touch the soul and the inner life, they do not ignore the body and its behavior. The lives of the saints concentrate on the role of the body in the different forms of worship, such as fasting, prostration, humility and submission, because this participation of the body with the soul, is a precedent of its participation in the everlasting glory with God. In other words, the participation of the body in acts of worship in general, and in prayer in particular, is a foreshadow of the glory of its resurrection at the end of time. Just as man is not made up solely of a body, so he is also not solely a spirit. He carries within him the two elements which react together and which share either in the strife or the neglect, in fervent worship as well as in evil doing. One cannot be partial to one element at the expense of the other.

Through this looking glass, we can discern between Christian asceticism which is neither enmity nor destruction to the body and other asceticism. It is rather having the body share in the pains in order to enjoy the glories. In other words, a Christian does not resist the body but he plans for it and controls its lusts, offering his body a sacrifice of love to God as the Apostle Paul says, "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Rom. 12:1)

### ***Monastic Writings:***

We do not have great monastic writings because most of the monks of Egypt turned more towards meditation and service than towards writing. Although we cannot

ignore the scribes especially in the Cenobitic monasteries, yet what they recorded was usually church books such as the Bible, the readings and hymns of the Church, and sermons of others. As for themselves, everyone of them longed to be enriched by spiritual thoughts not in their writings, but in a life of worship. This is what St. Evagrius Ponticus, who lived in Egypt, declared: (although he left many spiritual writings.) “You are a Theologian if you pray in truth, and you pray in truth if you are a Theologian.”

### ***Monasticism and the World:***

Since we read about monks who withdraw from the world to dedicate their lives to worship, we should understand their opinion of the world and the part they play in it. To a monk, the world has two meanings. On the one hand it is the present world which is opposed to the world to come, i.e. the lusts of the world and its desires and the pre-occupation with its troubles; this is the world that we should avoid. On the other hand, meaning its inhabitants or humanity, this we love in the Lord, the lover of mankind. If “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.” (John 3:16) it therefore behoves the monk, irrespective of the extent of his seclusion, to hold in his heart a true love for the world that continuously develops and grows with his spiritual progress and advancement.

Solitude is not seclusion from humanity but it is rather a unity with God the Lover of mankind. Even if we physically withdraw from the world, we carry in our hearts true love. When the true anchorite leaves the world with all its glories and worries, he lives in inner stillness and hears the sighs and moans of humanity which no one in the turmoil of the world would hear. In his spiritually quickened heart, the monk is more sensitive to the sufferings, pains and sighs of humanity, offering himself as a sacrifice of love on behalf of his brethren for their salvation, in his prayers, prostrations and asceticism. The true solitaries and hermits are closer to humanity in their hearts, than those who serve in the world physically and intellectually.

### ***Contemplative and Practical Life:***

Monasticism with all its different forms and rules has one common goal, “The quickening of the soul with the fiery work of the Holy Spirit”. It is appropriate for the true Cenobite, the Anchorite or the hermit to live by the Spirit. Though he may submit to certain orders or monastic rules, he lives within himself on a level of freedom. This zeal is the virtue of a true Christian, whether he be a monk or layman, pastor or member of a congregation, a young man, child or an oldman . . . All should enjoy what our Lord came for, when He said, “I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!” (Luke 12:49)

In conclusion, we can perceive in the lives of the holy monks an important path which is their insistence not to separate between the contemplative life and the practical life. The Christian in general, and the monk as a Christian offers his life in the Lord as a complete sacrifice, in which the body participates with the mind and the

soul, and all work in harmony. Any physical labor should be combined with a spiritual touch and any form of worship should not be separated from active labor in whatever form.

*Translated by Mrs. Lily Soliman*

### ***Notes***

(1) Father Abd-el-Messih the Ethiopian is one of the contemporary saintly figures in the Coptic Church whose origin and fate have been veiled in mystery. He was Ethiopian by birth and even, some say, a member of the royal family. He appeared in Scete in 1934. Apparently he walked the two thousand miles from his village in Ethiopia to the monastery of Baramous. He dug for himself a cave where he stayed, leading the life of a *holy fool*. He refused visitors and scolded the monks who approached him. In spite of this, two distinguished monks, at different times, won his trust and managed to live in caves near his, learning the solitary life under his guidance. One became later Pope Kyrillos VI, and the other Pope Shenouda III. About 1973, he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he disappeared.

*(Editor)*

# ***DEFENDER OF THE SPIRIT***

***The Rev. James E. Furman***

## ***Roots***

The term “Christian soldiers” well describes the family of St. Basil the Great (330-379) for their lives represent a history of disciplined spiritual combat. His father’s parents were Christian refugees forced to subsist in heavily-forested hills north of their homeland for seven years. His mother was the daughter of a martyr. One brother became a semi-solitary recluse and a sister was a famous nun. He himself led the life of a general whose biography is the record of his conflicts. Thus we see him taking command, issuing orders, developing strategies, fighting for territory, marshalling attacks, gathering reinforcements, drafting treaties, bringing campaigns to successful conclusion — all as a spiritual leader defending and expounding the doctrines of the Church.

Basil’s family was part of the land-owning aristocracy of Cappadocia. Their home was Annesi, a village noted for its dramatically beautiful scenery. One of the distinctive buildings of Annesi was a chapel built by Basil’s mother in honor of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.

## ***Early Years***

The formative years at Annesi echo and re-echo in Basil’s adult life. He was one of ten children and always preferred to live in groups paralleling a large family. He observed the liturgies of the family chapel and later emphasized the value of disciplined patterns of worship. Even the physical aspects of Annesi were remembered for his writings include the earliest Romantic descriptions of actual landscape found in European literature.

Basil was recognized as exceptionally intellectual at an early age. Accordingly, he was educated in the Greek literary tradition at the provincial capital of Caesarea, then at Alexandria in Egypt. Finally, when he was about twenty-one, he arrived at Athens to pursue advanced studies. In Athens, Basil was particularly close to another young Cappadocian, St. Gregory of Nazianzus. Indeed, much of what we know of Basil’s career and his impact on contemporaries is based on Gregory’s *Panegyric on Basil*.

Gregory makes it clear that Basil was a brilliant student and even credits him with a special interest in medicine, an unusual topic for the time. "The two great sources of power in the arts and sciences, ability and application, were in him equally combined. For, because of the pains he took, he had but little need for natural quickness, and his natural quickness made it necessary for him to take pains . . ." (Oration XLIII:23).

Very aware of his considerable academic achievements, Basil returned to his pious family and established himself in a secular career. He was a sought-after teacher who could bring prestige to any community where he opened a school. In a stormy later period, Basil reminded men with shorter memories of this fact: "I ask every one of you to remember those old days when I was invited by your city to take charge of the education of the young, and a deputation of the first men among you came to see me. Afterwards, when you all crowded round me, what were you not ready to give? What not to promise? (Letter CCX).

### *New Life*

Basil's beloved sister, Macrina, challenged his worldliness. Shaken by both her prayers and her character assessment, Basil was baptized and ordained as a reader in 357. Soon afterward, he made an extensive tour of monastic centers in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Egypt.

He was impressed by what he saw. "I admired their continence in living, and their endurance in toil; I was amazed by their persistence in prayer, and at their triumphing over sleep; . . . ever keeping the souls high and free . . . they never yielded to the body; . . . always, as though living in a flesh that was not theirs, they showed in very deed what it is to sojourn for a while in this life, and what to have one's citizenship and home in heaven" (Letter CCXXIII).

Basil used spiritual insight when he established his own monastic community. Study and reflection were given new prominence and service to society was made a definite part of the monastic way. Basil's maxims for his own monks were gathered into a *Rule* that has been of continued importance in all later monasticism.

### *Liturgy of St. Basil*

While in Egypt, Basil was exposed to new eucharistic rites. He seems to have taken some of these back to Cappadocia in written form, later revising them for use in his church at Caesarea. This revision includes enrichments emphasizing the Holy Spirit in language and style found throughout his writings. St. Gregory of Nazianzus seems to allude to this editorial work in his *Panegyric*, mentioning "arrangements of prayers, adornments of the sanctuary." In any case, it seems agreed that Basil shaped and enlarged the substance of the Liturgy that bears his name. This important matter is discussed at length in a significant article published by the University of Louvain (*Museon*, Vol. 47, 1960: "Un témoin archaïque de la liturgie copte de S. Basile," J.

Doresse, E. Lanne, B. Capelle; photographs of a Fourth Century Coptic version of the Liturgy of St. Basil are included). I thank the Rev. Hugh Wybrew of the Fellowship of SS. Alban and Sergius for his kindness in bringing this scholarship to my attention.

### ***Words of Charity***

Basil was ordained priest in 364. He served Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, travelling throughout Cappadocia preaching and organizing response to famine and a drastic increase in the number of orphans.

Just as he had made service to the world part of monastic discipline, Basil accepted charitable tasks as part of his own priestly work. Gregory of Nazianzus shows how this dedication involved use of Basil's personal resources.

"... by his word and advice he opened the stores of those who possessed them, and so, according to the Scripture dealt food to the hungry and satisfied the poor with bread . . . He gathered together the victims of the famine with some who were but slightly recovering from it, men and women, infants, old men, every age which was in distress, and obtaining contributions of all sorts of food which can relieve famine, set before them basins of soup and such meat as was found preserved among us, on which the poor can live. Then, imitating the ministry of Christ, who, girded with a towel, did not disdain to wash the disciple's feet, using for this purpose the aid of his own servants, and also of his fellow-servants, he attended to the bodies and souls of those who needed it, combining personal respect with the supply of their necessity, and so giving them a double relief."

Projects such as this were carried through in a rather tense situation for Basil's bishop was somewhat jealous of his gifted subordinate. Basil's capacity for tact and diplomacy is proved by his conduct in this environment. "... the power of the Church came into his hands almost, if not quite, to an equal degree with the occupant of the see. For in return for his good-will, he was requited with authority . . . The one was the leader of the people, the other of their leader, like a lion-keeper, skillfully soothing the possessor of power" (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Panegyric*).

During his own episcopate, Basil created a large network of hospitals, orphanages, and refuges for the poor on the outskirts of Caesarea. In time, this zone of Christian activity became the center of the town. Indeed, having superseded the original pagan city, this "Basilian settlement" is the basis of the modern Turkish city of Kayseria.

### ***Bishop***

Eusebius died in 370 and there was no immediate agreement as to who should be his successor. Gregory of Nazianzus and his aged father campaigned hard for Basil, persuading a majority of the provincial bishops to vote for his election. In the end, Basil was consecrated Bishop of Caesarea. Basil recalled his "electioneering" time with distaste: "Of the watchmen and the spies, who were given me under the

pretence of assistance and loving communion, I say nothing lest I seem to injure my own cause by telling an incredible tale, or giving believers an occasion for hating their fellows if I am believed. This had almost been my case, had I not been prevented by the mercy of God. For almost everyone became an object of suspicion to me, and smitten at heart as I was by wounds treacherously inflicted, I seemed to find nothing in any man that I could trust" (Letter CCXXIII:3).

Basil's vigorous advocacy of the Nicene Creed put him at odds with both the emperor and a number of other bishops. There was a move to punish Basil by dividing his jurisdiction into two quite unequal "halves". It was intended to leave Basil with control of only that portion of Cappadocia which was overwhelmingly rural.

Many stories survive to indicate the confrontations of this period. Some show Basil to have a touch of quick humor; all portray him as completely unmoved by attempting intimidation. An episode preserved in *The Ecclesiastical History* of Theodoret (393-458) is typical.

"Now there was present a certain man of the name of Demosthenes, superintendent of the imperial kitchen, who in rudely chiding the one who instructed the world was guilty of a solecism of speech. Basil smiled and said 'We see here an illiterate Demosthenes;' and on Demosthenes losing his temper and uttering threats, he continued 'your business is to attend to the seasoning of soups; you cannot understand theology because your ears are stopped up'" (IV:XVI).

It was in this wrangling period that Basil created many suffragan bishops to administer the country districts of Cappadocia. The point was to keep large tracts of the province and their revenue in friendly hands. Accordingly, his brother Gregory was appointed to Nyssa and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus was assigned to Sasima.

Much negative comment has been made about Basil's willingness to manipulate in the tradition of partisan politics. The pride and grasp of a great landowner has been detected along with the hauteur of a conservative aristocrat confronting newly-minted, newly-enriched "officers and gentlemen".

It is true that Basil's attitude was strongly political. His aggressive personality and sense of position are also evident. However, these realities must be related to other, larger, realities. In particular, it is clear that Basil saw both a doctrinal system and an established system of charities under attack. The rough edges are the result of need to defend the spiritual and social health of many.

### ***Writings***

After less than a decade in office, Basil died on January 1, 379. A large part of the saint's monument is his correspondence, a collection that fills four volumes in the Loeb Greek-English edition. In this material Basil reveals himself to be a complex and wide-ranging personality with moods varying from the fierce to the elegiac.

The mellowness of old ivory colors many personal letters. His brief note to Olympius is particularly graceful. "As all of the fruits of the season come to us in their proper time with flowers in spring, corn in summer, and apples in autumn, so the fruit for winter is conversation with friends" (Letter XIII).

Two major books present Basil in command of both the range of Scripture and the apparatus of Late Classical culture. These works are *On the Holy Spirit* and *The Six Days of Creation*.

Written in 374, *On the Holy Spirit* is a very long friendly essay to Amphilochius, a cousin of Gregory of Nazianzus. Despite its complexities, the work has a main theme which can be stated very clearly.

"The Lord has delivered to us as a necessary and saving doctrine that the Holy Spirit is to be ranked with the Father. Our opponents think differently, and see fit to divide and rend asunder, and relegate Him to the nature of a ministering spirit. Is it not then indisputable that they make their own blasphemy more authoritative than the Law prescribed by the Lord?"

He noted that "through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a word, our being brought into a state of all 'fullness of blessing' . . ."

"Is it Christ's advent? The Spirit is forerunner. Is there the incarnate presence? The Spirit is inseparable. Working of miracles and gifts of healing are through the Holy Spirit. Demons were driven out by the Spirit of God. The devil was brought to naught by the presence of the Spirit. Remission of sins was by the gift of the Spirit . . . There is close relationship with God through the Spirit for 'God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying *Abba*, Father'. The resurrection from the dead is effected by the operation of the Spirit . . ."

The result of Basil's writing was decisive. Orthodox Christians were convinced that full faith in God is a Trinitarian understanding in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally real and significant. Thus, Basil's work completed the "unfinished business" of the Council of Nicaea.

*The Six Days of Creation (Hexameron)* is a collection of nine extemporaneous homilies recorded by a stenographer. Details in the text itself indicate that it is a Lenten series delivered at morning and evening services attended by workers. Byzantine tradition regarded it as the best of Basil's writings.

A work such as *The Six Days of Creation* does not fare well in modern America. It does not get read because secular conditioning disposes against "pre-scientific" works. This is unfortunate because Basil has much to say that should be heard. In particular, he offers a valuable alternative to both fundamentalistic literalism and to detached historicism. His strength is that he writes in a period when it was impossible to give a truly unreligious interpretation to physical phenomena, impossible to ignore faith as a component of life. Indeed, Basil challenges modern theologians to



know contemporary culture as well as he knew Aristotle and Pliny, to put such knowledge in service to the Church in a creative rather than a confrontational way.

Basil's understanding of Creation is spiritual and symbolic even while completely based on Scripture. ". . . if it is said, 'In the beginning God created,' it is to teach us that at the will of God the world arose in less than an instant, and it is to convey this message more clearly than other interpreters have said: 'God made summarily,' that is to say all at once and in a moment".

"It must be well understood that when we speak of the voice, of the word, of the command of God, this divine language does not mean to us a sound which escapes from the organs of speech, a collision of air struck by the tongue; it is a simple sign of the will of God, and, if we have given it the form of an order, it is only the better to impress the souls whom we instruct."

*The Six Days of Creation* begins with praise of "the good order which reigns in visible things." Affirmation of this very basic Biblical understanding was quite important in a time when many condemned the world as the product of a dark and limited spirit or feared life in a realm that seemed ruled only by chance.

"You will finally discover that the world was not conceived by chance and without reason, but for a useful end and for the great advantage of all beings, since it is really the school where reasonable souls exercise themselves, the training ground where they learn to know God: since by the sight of visible and sensible things the mind is led, as by a hand, to the contemplation of invisible things."

Basil can write with warm-hearted appreciation of beauties seen in this world. ". . . the proper and natural adornment of the earth is its completion: corn waving in the valleys — meadows green with grass and rich with many-colored flowers — fertile glades and hill tops shaded by forests." However, he always stands in relation to things as a theologian: "I should like to see you, recognizing grandeur even in small objects, adding incessantly to your admiration of, and redoubling your love for, the Creator."

Basil's audience would have been exposed to interpretations of the phenomena of nature ranging from cool Greek philosophy to Gnosticism to "mad-minded Manichean" belief in the "soul power" of earth, stars, animals, and plants. Therefore, Basil's pattern of finding lessons in creation was "Christianization" of the physical world.

One example illustrates much of Basil's method. "I have heard it said by one living near the sea, that the sea urchin, a little contemptible creature, often foretells calm and tempest to sailors. When it foresees a disturbance of the winds, it gets under a great pebble, and clinging to it as an anchor, it tosses about in safety, restrained by the weight which prevents it from becoming the plaything of the waves . . . No astrologer, no Chaldean, reading in the rising of the stars the disturbance of the air, has ever communicated his secret to the urchin: it is the Lord of sea and of the winds who has impressed on this little animal a manifest proof of his great wisdom . . . If God has not left the sea urchin outside his providence, is he without care for you?"

Basil sees Christian content even in the Old Testament. Hence, the final homily of *The Six Days of Creation* presents Trinitarian instruction. ““And God said let us make man’. Tell me: is there then only one Person? It is not written ‘Let man be made’, but ‘Let us make man.’ The preaching of the theology remains enveloped in shadow before the appearance of him who was to be instructed, but now the creation of man is expected, faith unveils herself and the dogma of truth appears . . . hear God speaking to his Co-operator, to Him by Whom also He made the worlds, Who upholds all things by the word of His power . . . It is then to His living image, to Him Who has said, ‘I and my Father are one,’ . . . that God says ‘Let us make man in our image’ . . .”

The title of a famous English novel is *Pride and Prejudice*. In the case of St. Basil, this might well be revised to be *Pride and Profundity* for to the degree that he was “proud” of God, Basil was profound indeed.

***Note:***

Translations used in this article are taken from Volumes III, VII, and VIII in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, second series.

# ***THE POSITION OF ORIGEN IN THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE***

***Rodolph Yanney, M.D.***

Origen, described by Quasten as the outstanding teacher and scholar of the early Church<sup>1</sup>, was born in Alexandria in AD 185 and left it for good in 232. With the discovery of some of his lost writings, the newer translations of his works, the renewed interest in his biblical exegesis, theology and spirituality, the question arises - How is Origen looked upon by his original Church? Because there is no unanimous agreement by the Egyptian Church Fathers on this issue, it has to be examined in its historical perspective.

## ***Origen and Demetrius***

The first one to throw a stone at Origen was his bishop, St. Demetrius, the 12th Patriarch of Alexandria. This was precipitated by the ordination of Origen to the presbyterate in Palestine<sup>2</sup>. After calling two synods in Alexandria, the latter probably consisted only of three bishops<sup>3</sup>, Demetrius managed to forbid Origen from teaching or residing in Alexandria, but could not go any further<sup>4</sup>. Origen was not tried or his defence heard and the grounds of the condemnation are nowhere stated. Eusebius assumes that the only charge was his self-inflicted castration years before. However, the truth of this story is doubted by modern authors<sup>5</sup>. In a letter to the Bishop Pontian of Rome, Demetrius, misquoting a passage in which Origen implied that the devil could be saved, accused him of heresy.

## ***Successors of Demetrius***

Shortly after, Demetrius, already an old man in his eighties, died and was succeeded by Heraclas who had been converted to Christianity through the teaching of Origen and had been for nearly thirty years his disciple. Heraclas was succeeded sixteen years later by Dionysius, another pupil and admirer of Origen. Yet things did not go smoothly for Origen; neither Heraclas nor Dionysius did anything to recall their master to Alexandria, a fact which gives more significance to the decision of Demetrius, it could not have been motivated merely by personal jealousy<sup>6</sup>. In his re-

cent Book, *Origen*, J. W. Trigg considers the problem as a tension between the charismatic leadership represented by Origen, and the hierarchical leadership in understanding the authority in the Church.<sup>7</sup>

Near the end of his life, Heraclas had more reasons to attack Origen. Bishop Ammonius of Thmuis, a city in the Nile Delta, was accused of once harboring Origen, and for this a synod headed by Heraclas deposed him. However, the congregation backed their bishop, challenging the authority of the Patriarch<sup>8</sup>. More fuel was given to the fire by an Alexandrian coming from Ephesus where he had met Origen. He told Heraclas that Origen had criticized him in public, and in addition he gave the Archbishop a copy of a fictitious account of an assumed debate between him and Origen which depicted Origen as a heretic. With this in his hand, Heraclas started a campaign against Origen by writing to Bishop Fabian of Rome. But he died in 247 before he could complete the process of Origen's ruin<sup>9</sup>.

Dionysius (247-265) had no desire to continue the action against his teacher. He even sent him an encouraging letter when he was in prison in the Decian persecution. Only small fragments remain of his extensive writings, but his sympathy with Origen's allegorical interpretation appears in the way he dealt with the chiliastic movement in Arsinoe when its bishop Nepos taught about an earthly millenium<sup>10</sup>. Some of his writings reflect a theology highly influenced by Origen, to an extreme which forced him to write an *Apology* stressing his orthodox belief, and which had to be defended a century later by St. Athanasius.<sup>11 12</sup>

The archbishops of Alexandria after Dionysius represent a more tempered Origenism. Notably St. Peter, the martyr (300-311) corrected parts of the theological system of Origen<sup>13</sup>, especially in his works *On the Godhead*, *On the Soul* and *On the Resurrection*<sup>14</sup>.

Of Athanasius the Great who presided over the Egyptian Church for nearly half a century (326-373), Socrates says, "But Athanasius the defender of the doctrine of consubstantiality in his *Discourses against the Arians*, continually cites this author (Origen) as a witness of his own faith, interweaving his words with his own, and saying, 'The most admirable and assiduous Origen, by his own testimony confirms our doctrine . . .'<sup>15</sup> The earliest treatises of Athanasius, *Against the Heathen* and *On the Incarnation of the Word* show how much he was influenced by Origen<sup>16</sup>. Athanasius appealed to Origen's doctrine of eternal generation and to his understanding of redemption in order to refute the subordinationism of the Arians<sup>17</sup>.

Athanasius appointed two well-known Origenists in key positions in the Alexandrian Church - Didymus the Blind as head of the Catechetical School, and Isidore as Director of the guest-house of Alexandria, where the poor and strangers were cared for.

### ***The School of Alexandria after Origen***

In spite of the resistance which the theology of Origen encountered during various periods, the heads of the Catechetical School of Alexandria after Heraclas did not

abandon the teaching of the great Master. The Origenistic character is purest and most marked in Theognostus (C. 265-282)<sup>18</sup>, Pierius (C. 282-309) and Didymus (346-398), Pierius was called by his contemporaries *Origen Junior*<sup>19</sup>.

Didymus was the most famous among the heads of the Catechetical School in the fourth century, and he held that position from the time of Athanasius till the time of Theophilus. Among his pupils were such famous divines as St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Jerome and Rufinus. The last two highly praised him in their writings<sup>20</sup>. He wrote extensive commentaries on all the books of the Bible<sup>21</sup>, as well as many dogmatic works. He is considered the theologian of the Trinity, and he defined the Alexandrian teaching on christology, thus laying the foundation for St. Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>22</sup> He devoted one of his works to the defense of Origen's controversial work *On First Principles*, with apparently no opposition from the Egyptian Church leaders. Jerome called Didymus 'the most open champion of Origen'<sup>23</sup>.

Didymus described those who tried to attack Origen or speak slightly of his works as mere cavilers who 'are destitute of sufficient penetration to comprehend the profound wisdom of that extraordinary man.'<sup>24</sup> Didymus died in 398 and is revered as a saint in the Coptic Church.

### ***Origenism in the Egyptian Desert.***

Monasticism was well established throughout the Egyptian deserts for half a century before we could hear of any problem it had with the teaching of Origen. Suddenly at the turn of the century, the quiet desert was changed into a battlefield, mainly in Nitria. But the other centers did not escape. Some scholars, including modern Egyptian historians<sup>25</sup>, have simply attributed this to foreign influence that introduced Origenistic and Hellenistic ideas among the monks who lived by and believed in the realism of the gospel. Accusing fingers pointed at Evagrius Ponticus who came to Nitria in AD 382 and remained in the Egyptian desert till his death in 399. That this was not the case is evident from the witness of St. Epiphanius who found Origenists among the monks during his visit to Egypt in 370<sup>26</sup>. Also it is difficult to believe that the theological atmosphere in Alexandria was unable to affect Nitria which was forty miles away. The house of Didymus was always open to the monks, even St. Antony visited it three times<sup>27</sup>. When Evagrius reached Nitria there was already a strong group of Origenists there, led by the four Tall Brothers, Dioscorus, Ammonius, Eusebius and Euthymius, who were disciples of St. Pambo.

The Patriarchs of Alexandria were more than sympathetic to the Origenistic movement in the desert. Pope Timothy (d. 385) tried to ordain Ammonius to the episcopate with no success; the strict monk cut his left ear and threatened to cut his tongue if the people compelled him to accept the ordination<sup>28</sup>. Pope Theophilus loved and honored the Tall brothers and he ordained Dioscorus as bishop of Hermopolis (Damanhour) and two of them as Priests in Alexandria<sup>29</sup>. But he failed to persuade Evagrius to be the bishop of Thmuis<sup>30</sup>.

However, most of the Egyptian monks spoke only the Coptic language and had nothing to do with the writings of Origen till it began to affect their prayer life. Cassian describes this in a picturesque way in the case of a certain Sarapion who was persuaded to discontinue his devotional practice of setting a corporal image of God before his mind during prayers. Once he started prayer, the old man was bewildered in mind and suddenly burst into tears and sobs and cast himself down on the floor crying with strong groanings, "Alas, wretched man that I am! they have taken my God from me, and I have now none to lay hold of, and whom to worship and address I know not"<sup>31</sup>.

Sarapion was actually representing the majority, who were given the name *anthropomorphites* by their opponents. When Theophilus spoke in the church and wrote in his festal letter of 399 against those who attributed to God a human form, he was in great trouble. Soon he had to change his position. According to a Sahidic manuscript written probably in the later part of the fifth century a certain hermit by the name of Abba Aphou of Pemdje quickly went to Alexandria, met the Archbishop and convinced him to retract his statement<sup>32</sup>.

Foreign historians have other stories to tell. Cassian states that the festal letter of Theophilus was received by almost all the body of monks residing in the whole province of Egypt with great bitterness. They accused him of heresy and rejected his letter. Of the four churches in Scete it was read to the congregation in one church only<sup>33</sup>.

Socrates and Sozomen describe how the monks left the desert for Alexandria where they excited a tumult against the Archbishop and threatened to kill him. In order to save his life, he addressed the monks in a conciliatory tone, saying, "In seeing you, I behold the face of God." Upon their insistence, he condemned the works of Origen<sup>34</sup>. With this the monks returned to their cells and the whole dispute was set at rest, but for a while.

It was from this period that we have Egyptian monastic writings against Origen. The *Apophthegmatic Patrum* includes the story of Abba Lot of Arsinoe who forced an old monk to leave by preventing him from quoting the words of Origen<sup>35</sup>. Also it mentions the story of St. Epiphanius who while praying for a man with an evil spirit, heard it say that it was the spirit which was speaking in Origen<sup>36</sup>. The Greek Life of Pachomius states that he hated Origen and warned the monks against reading his writings. One day, having found a book of Origen, he threw it into the water and destroyed it<sup>37</sup>.

### ***Theophilus and Origen***

Anti-Origenism reached its climax in Egypt for a very short period in AD 400, after which it faded for ever. The reason had nothing to do with theology, but because of the disturbed relations between Theophilus and five of his most trustworthy friends: Isidore, the director of the guesthouse of Alexandria, and the four Tall Brothers. Apparently Theophilus was in the process of building several church-

es in Alexandria and he left no stone unturned for the sake of getting the money needed. The two Tall brothers who worked with him found that they were spiritually injured by his method and they retired into the desert of Nitria<sup>38</sup>. At the same time Theophilus was boiling with hatred toward Isidore, whom he had previously recommended for the See of Constantinople, and had previously trusted with several delicate and confidential missions<sup>39</sup>. Now when Theophilus needed money, Isidore refused to give up money which had been entrusted to him for the relief of the poor, saying that it is better to restore the bodies of the suffering which are more rightly to be considered the temples of God, than to build walls<sup>40</sup>. Isidore was expelled from his office and he went to his old cell, among his old friends in Nitria. Failing to bring charges of immorality<sup>41</sup> against Isidore, Theophilus directed his fury against the monks of Nitria, accusing them of Origenism. He called a synod of bishops in Nitria which condemned the teaching of Origen especially his book *First Principles*<sup>42</sup>. Force was used against the monks, some were beaten and their cells were set on fire. More than three hundred venerable monks had to flee to Palestine for their life<sup>43</sup>. Among those, beside the Tall Brothers and Isidore, now in his eighties, were the ninety year old Hierax, Isaac the priest of Scete, who headed a monastery of one hundred and fifty ascetics of whom at least seven had been ordained bishops by Theophilus, Isaac the priest of Cellia<sup>44</sup>, and John Cassian.

To make the life of the fugitives outside Egypt impossible, Theophilus now joined the anti-Origenists who had been waging a battle outside Egypt led by St. Epiphanius of Cyprus and St. Jerome and which he had been previously reluctant to join despite Jerome's repeated requests. He wrote letters to Jerome and to the bishops of Rome, Cyprus and Palestine condemning Origenism and advising against the reception of the Nitrian monks. Finding their position in Palestine desperate, some fifty monks reached Constantinople in AD 402 and complained to its Patriarch, St. John Chrysostom and to the imperial court<sup>45</sup>. Instead of being tried at Constantinople, Theophilus managed to turn the tables on Chrysostom and to depose him in the Synod of the Oak<sup>45</sup>.

The Alexandrian crusade against Origenism quickly cooled down, even while Theophilus was still in Constantinople. In the synod of the Oak a torrent of accusations was poured against Chrysostom, but no mention was made of Origen<sup>46</sup>. Theophilus reconciled himself with the Egyptian monks and restored them to Communion<sup>47</sup>. Isidore, Dioscorus and Ammonius died in Constantinople. When Theophilus heard of the death of Ammonius, he shed tears and declared that there had never been a monk of exalted character than him<sup>47</sup>.

It has been stated that toward the end of his life, Pope Theophilus washed his dark deeds with the tears of repentance and he has been venerated as a saint in all churches, East and West<sup>48</sup>. The contemporary historian Socrates mentions how he continued to read Origen's works, and when he was asked about that, he replied, "Origen's books are like a meadow enamelled with flowers of every kind. If I

chance to find a beautiful one among them, I cull it: but whatever appears to me to be thorny, I step over<sup>49</sup>.”

After Theophilus the Origen Controversy was not raised in the Egyptian Church, although it raged for a long time overseas and ended in his final condemnation in AD 553 by the Second Council of Constantinople. This council is not acknowledged by the Coptic Church.

In the Coptic Orthodox Church at present Origen is an enigma in search for a solution. Several Coptic historians in the twentieth century have tried to defend him<sup>50</sup>. On the other hand, monastic writers still attack him and belittle his achievements<sup>51</sup>. More recently, for the first time, we have some of his works translated into Arabic<sup>52</sup>, and a new monumental Bible commentary freely and extensively quotes him<sup>53</sup>. The writings of Origen have been his best advocate in the West, and we hope that the new Arabic translations may give him the place he deserves in the Coptic Church as a ‘a teacher, an interpreter of God to man, a Christian militant, a philosopher and a great spiritual’<sup>54</sup>.

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this article Fr. Florovsky discusses in detail the historical importance of the  
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This story, if authentic, would bring the Origenistic problem in the desert too  
early in the fourth century, since Pachomius died in AD 346.
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Palestine which were translated to Latin by Jerome (Letters, 92)
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who are genuinely 'in Christ Jesus' will ultimately be 'conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29). This book is written in the subdued, cautious style of an English lawyer and gentleman. It can be readily recommended to anyone whose first language is not English for it is deceptively 'simple' despite being profound. Sir Norman has the gift of conveying important events and truths very simply.

The thread of a happy marriage is one of several important threads running through the story. Lady Pat, his wife for over 50 years, has suffered major surgery on several occasions. She has also had the anxiety of separation through war and through Norman's commitment to God's battle against Evil. I found it difficult to hold back my tears when I read about the deaths of all three of the Andersons' remarkably gifted children. Their son was a brilliant scholar at Cambridge who died in the midst of his studies after several operations for cancer. He was not yet twenty-two years old when he lay dying and said to his Christian doctor; "I am drawing near my Lord, I think my work is done". Their elder daughter Hazel, who had four daughters of her own, died in tragic circumstances after surgery on her legs. Their second daughter Janet was unmarried and qualified as a doctor in London. While working in Africa she was brutally sexually assaulted for some hours by two Africans who took all her belongings. She returned to England and, whilst working in an English hospital, had a serious fall in her flat and died before anyone came to look for her. It has seemed right to make a brief mention of these harrowing tragedies because of the contrast they make with the extraordinary success of Sir Norman's life as an international authority on Islamic Law and as an Anglican churchman. This is what he writes:

"People used continually to ask us why a young man of such promise, and with such a zest for life, should be allowed to die so young. To this the only reply, we both feel, is that we do not, and cannot know. The vital question to ask God in such cases is not 'Why did You allow this?' (To which He seldom, I think, vouchsafes an answer), But 'What do You want to teach me through this?' There is one blessing in such circumstances to which we can all aspire. It was spelled out in the message Jesus sent to John the Baptist "Blessed is he who takes no offense at me" (St. Matthew 11:6 RSV). Or we could express it in Samuel's words: "He is the Lord our Covenant God; let Him do what is good in His eyes." (1 Samuel 3:18)

Since the modern Islamic Revival, Sir Norman has travelled widely and lectured in many Islamic universities. He is wisely diplomatic in his comment, with the exception of Saudi Arabia of which he says: "I was not sorry to leave a country where savage punishments are imposed on the generality of men and women for acts which those who are 'persona grata' can do with comparative impunity."

Sir Norman once lived in the village of Abu Sweir and preached there at a time when there was no Coptic priest in the district. His days in Ismailia may be compared with the conditions applying today. The outstanding Christian of the area in the 1930s was a former Skeikh of Al Azhar who retained the title and name Sheikh

But most valuable to the study of Moore's life are his own published writings. Marius devotes whole chapters to many of these books, as well as analyzing the lengthy letters Moore wrote to other sixteenth century literary figures. A full three chapters are spent discussing *Utopia*, Moore's most famous work. The correspondence between Moore and the reformist theologian Erasmus (who compiled the Greek New Testament from which much of the King James version is based) are covered extensively. Marius is even thoughtful enough to include a photograph of the only known surviving manuscript in Moore's own handwriting, "De tristitia Christi".

On the human side, Moore was also his own best publicity agent. He longed to present himself to the public in a humble manner as the good family man who was dragged into a royal career against his own wishes. In truth, Moore enjoyed his position of privilege and prestige as an important advisor to King Henry. He seemed to have a good feel for money and its sources, always taking care never to offend the wrong people.

We are shown the negative side of Moore early in the book: the fierce heresy hunter who was always trying to smell-out threats against the Roman church. Toward the end of his tenure as lord chancellor, when it became obvious King Henry would divorce Cathrine of Aragon to marry Ann Boleyn, Moore became particularly concerned about the activities of William Tyndale and other Protestants. In the many books he wrote against Martin Luther at this time, Moore dropped the veneer of civility and turned a white-hot blast of hatred against his enemy.

Yet, the picture of the royal advisor who followed his morals instead of his king remains intact. It is still conclusive that Moore gave up his position because he could not accept a ruler that felt he was above the church. Although the statements Moore officially made about Henry's remarriage, as Marius presents them, appear innocent enough, the government knew Moore had set a dangerous example by refusing to sign a pledge of allegiance to the king's new church. Moore had even gone so far as to state that the king's remarriage was of no concern to him, only that he could not endorse it. Even so, it led to his execution on trumped-up treason charges.

Richard Marius' biography of Moore will serve as a standard for years to come. It is extensive and reveals Thomas Moore with all his short-comings and wisdom. Those wanting to read about a saint or a demon will be disappointed.

Timothy Mayer

St. Louis, Missouri

## **Ministry**

*Message of the Fathers of the Church, Volume 8. By Joseph T. Lienhard, S. J. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1984. Pp. 183. Paper, \$7.95. Cloth, \$15.00.*

The Message of the Fathers of the Church series, composed of 22 volumes, aims at giving the teaching of the Fathers on main theological and sacramental topics.

***A History of the Monks of Syria: By Theodoret of Cyrrhus***

*Translated with an Introduction and Notes by R. M. Price. Kalamazoo, Michigan. Cistercian Publications, 1985. Pp. 223. Hardcover, \$26.95. Paperback, \$10.00.*

The author of this book, which is translated into English for the first time, is the controversial Theodoret bishop of Cyrrhus (c. 393-466) who was deposed by the council of Ephesus (AD 449) for teaching a duality in Christ, and whose writings against St. Cyril of Alexandria made one of *The Three Chapters* condemned at the Council of Constantinople (AD 553). *Religious History* (the title of the book in the Syriac) is the major source for the history of monasticism of northern Syria in the fourth and fifth centuries. Ancient monasticism in Syria is different from that in Egypt and the translator tries hard to prove its independent origin. The reader who is acquainted with the *Paradise of the Holy Fathers* or the *Apophthegmata Patrum* will find himself in a different atmosphere where the emphasis is on the externals of asceticism rather than the interior life. Instead of giving details about the prayers, Christian virtues or spiritual struggles of the monks, Theodoret dwells upon their physical endurance. St. James of Cyrrhestica lived all the time in the open air, while he carried heavy chains. Not contented with being tied to a rock by a chain, St. Symeon the Stylite spent years standing on a pillar. Marana and Cyra lived for forty-two years in an enclosure that had neither roof, nor door. Cyra never spoke to visitors and her weak body was bent down to the ground by the iron weight she always carried.

Theodoret did not write his work for those who search for an example to imitate, but for those who seek a visible spiritual life as an object to venerate, a visible manifestation of divine grace.

## ***BOOKS RECEIVED***

### ***Eerdman's Book of Christian Classics.***

*Compiled by Veronica Zundel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. W. Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 125. Cloth, \$12.95.*

A beautifully illustrated collection of Christian writings from the first century to the present, with a brief biographical introduction to each.

### ***The Manual of Life: The New Testament for Daily Living.***

*By M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O. New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. 118. Paper, \$4.95.*

A short meditative introduction to each book of the New Testament based on Tradition and Church life as well as latest scholarship, and illustrated by examples and pictures from today's life.

### ***Church, Ministry, and Sacraments in the New Testament.***

*By C. K. Barrett. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 110. Paper, \$6.95.*

The author dilutes the teaching of the NT on the Sacraments and Church ministry in a way which is consistent with neither traditional nor modern biblical exegesis.

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Each book deals with an individual theme and is written by a scholar who has demonstrated interest and competence in it.

The present book discusses the ministry in its technical sense, as an office in the Church, rather than its general meaning as service. Like the other books in the series, it lets the Fathers speak for themselves, in a modern English translation. The book has three main sections; in each we have the different Fathers describing their theological outlook on the ministry in general or on the functions and social impact of each office in the Church.

In a brief introduction, the author summarizes the theological developments in the ministry. He starts by giving an account of the diverse ministries mentioned in the New Testament (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 11:30, 14:23, 20:17-38, 21:18; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). Then he describes the ministry in the post-Apostolic period, the Apostolic succession, the relations of bishops, presbyters and deacons and the Church councils. In the introduction, the author refers not only to the texts produced in the book, but also to other texts and Church canons.

The first section, *the Early Development*, gives texts from the Epistle of Clement, Ignatius, the Didache, Justin Martyr, Hippolytus and the Didascalia Apostolorum.

The second section chooses texts from the Eastern Fathers, including Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Eusebius of Alexandria.

The last section has texts from the Western Fathers - Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Siricius of Rome.

### ***The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Volume III***

*Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986. Pp. 1080. \$37.50.*

With this volume (covering the letters K-P) the new edition of the ISBE is three-quarters of the way to completion. The work is scholarly and up-to-date and includes a mine of information about every person or place mentioned in the Bible, as well as all theological terms. The introductions to the books of the Bible are very comprehensive. However, most of the authors are of Evangelical background and in several places (like the entries on the Lord's Supper, Maccabees, Mary and Ministry) the subject is dealt with mainly from the Protestant point-of-view.



But most valuable to the study of Moore's life are his own published writings. Marius devotes whole chapters to many of these books, as well as analyzing the lengthy letters Moore wrote to other sixteenth century literary figures. A full three chapters are spent discussing *Utopia*, Moore's most famous work. The correspondence between Moore and the reformist theologian Erasmus (who compiled the Greek New Testament from which much of the King James version is based) are covered extensively. Marius is even thoughtful enough to include a photograph of the only known surviving manuscript in Moore's own handwriting, "De tristitia Christi".

On the human side, Moore was also his own best publicity agent. He longed to present himself to the public in a humble manner as the good family man who was dragged into a royal career against his own wishes. In truth, Moore enjoyed his position of privilege and prestige as an important advisor to King Henry. He seemed to have a good feel for money and its sources, always taking care never to offend the wrong people.

We are shown the negative side of Moore early in the book: the fierce heresy hunter who was always trying to smell-out threats against the Roman church. Toward the end of his tenure as lord chancellor, when it became obvious King Henry would divorce Cathrine of Aragon to marry Ann Boleyn, Moore became particularly concerned about the activities of William Tyndale and other Protestants. In the many books he wrote against Martin Luther at this time, Moore dropped the veneer of civility and turned a white-hot blast of hatred against his enemy.

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The Message of the Fathers of the Church series, composed of 22 volumes, aims at giving the teaching of the Fathers on main theological and sacramental topics.

Kamil Mansur. Sheikh Kamil preached openly to Muslims and even visited his old mosque “found the corner where I used to sit, with the prayer mat I remembered so well and . . . lifted up my heart to God . . . for bringing me into the light . . . that is Christ Jesus.” Norman Anderson later discovered that the Sheikh had been led to Christianity by his brother who had been convinced and converted by a Coptic Orthodox priest. The story of these brothers is related in some detail in the book because the author wishes readers in the West to be aware of the “many sons whom God has been bringing to glory *from* Islam.” (my emphasis).

No book can totally satisfy and I wish that Sir Norman had spared us the excrable verse of Timothy Dudley-Smith whom he quotes twice; they are hardly up to the Rossetti poem he quotes with good effect. But this is a small quibble and I only mention it because quotation by such a giant may lend an undeserved authority to unworthy versifying.

The lasting impression left by this fine book is that the pursuit of Holiness is not only personally fulfilling but that it is God’s fixed purpose that every Christian should be conformed to the image of His Son; and that this should proceed progressively here on Earth and completed when we see Him face to face. The lessons of this ‘adopted son’, Norman Anderson, are worth the attention of every Christian.

*John Watson*

*Upper Walmer, Kent, England*

### ***Thomas Moore***

*By Richard Marius. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf.*

Biographies of famous historical characters are always greeted with a little apprehension. Often, they either turn out to be attempts to slander a popular person or to turn a villain into a saint. Sir Thomas Moore, who gained fame as the lord chancellor of England’s King Henry the Eighth and who was willing to face imprisonment and death over giving his public consent to Henry’s divorce and rupture with the church of Rome, is an excellent example. To many of the Roman Catholic faith, he is a hero of the church. But many Protestants consider Moore a reactionary at best. It is with much gratitude that Moore’s latest biographer has chosen to show us the human side of Thomas Moore. Richard Marius has constructed a vivid picture of Moore with surprising little bias or comment.

One of the largest sources for information on Moore, and Marius makes frequent mention of them, are the various “lives” of Moore which have passed down to us since the time of his execution. William Roper, Moore’s son-in-law, wrote the most well-known biography with the intent of having Moore sainted. Later works have been a little more objective, such as E. E. Reynolds *The Field is Won* (1968). Compiling a massive amount of stories, letters, and public records, Marius is able to show us where many accounts differ and contradict each other.

who are genuinely 'in Christ Jesus' will ultimately be 'conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29). This book is written in the subdued, cautious style of an English lawyer and gentleman. It can be readily recommended to anyone whose first language is not English for it is deceptively 'simple' despite being profound. Sir Norman has the gift of conveying important events and truths very simply.

The thread of a happy marriage is one of several important threads running through the story. Lady Pat, his wife for over 50 years, has suffered major surgery on several occasions. She has also had the anxiety of separation through war and through Norman's commitment to God's battle against Evil. I found it difficult to hold back my tears when I read about the deaths of all three of the Andersons' remarkably gifted children. Their son was a brilliant scholar at Cambridge who died in the midst of his studies after several operations for cancer. He was not yet twenty-two years old when he lay dying and said to his Christian doctor; "I am drawing near my Lord, I think my work is done". Their elder daughter Hazel, who had four daughters of her own, died in tragic circumstances after surgery on her legs. Their second daughter Janet was unmarried and qualified as a doctor in London. While working in Africa she was brutally sexually assaulted for some hours by two Africans who took all her belongings. She returned to England and, whilst working in an English hospital, had a serious fall in her flat and died before anyone came to look for her. It has seemed right to make a brief mention of these harrowing tragedies because of the contrast they make with the extraordinary success of Sir Norman's life as an international authority on Islamic Law and as an Anglican churchman. This is what he writes:

"People used continually to ask us why a young man of such promise, and with such a zest for life, should be allowed to die so young. To this the only reply, we both feel, is that we do not, and cannot know. The vital question to ask God in such cases is not 'Why did You allow this?' (To which He seldom, I think, vouchsafes an answer), But 'What do You want to teach me through this?' There is one blessing in such circumstances to which we can all aspire. It was spelled out in the message Jesus sent to John the Baptist "Blessed is he who takes no offense at me" (St. Matthew 11:6 RSV). Or we could express it in Samuel's words: "He is the Lord our Covenant God; let Him do what is good in His eyes." (1 Samuel 3:18)

Since the modern Islamic Revival, Sir Norman has travelled widely and lectured in many Islamic universities. He is wisely diplomatic in his comment, with the exception of Saudi Arabia of which he says: "I was not sorry to leave a country where savage punishments are imposed on the generality of men and women for acts which those who are 'persona grata' can do with comparative impunity."

Sir Norman once lived in the village of Abu Sweir and preached there at a time when there was no Coptic priest in the district. His days in Ismailia may be compared with the conditions applying today. The outstanding Christian of the area in the 1930s was a former Skeikh of Al Azhar who retained the title and name Sheikh

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### ***An Adopted Son***

*By Norman Anderson. Leicester, England. Inter-Varsity Press, 1985, 301 pp. Available from Christian bookshops in USA: \$7.50.*

The vocation of the present writer is that of a priest but by occupation it could easily be changed to “book-reader”; so many books pass across my desk. It is a disappointing occupation and it is easy to be hesitant when a current publication is mentioned. Christian books pile in from America and Britain but too many represent the careless, thoughtless, agnostic face of much modern Christianity. It is with genuine pleasure that I commend this astonishing Christian autobiography. The book commands the attention of anyone interested in Christian Egypt if only because it contrasts a liberal religious period in the past with a time of growing intolerance.

Professor Emeritus Sir Norman Anderson is a man of immense distinction in the eyes of the world. He is a Queen’s Counsel, Doctor of Law, Doctor of Divinity and Fellow of the British Academy. For many years he was Professor of Oriental Laws in London University and Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. He is also a down-to-earth, believing Christian. He has been a full time missionary to Islam in Egypt, a wartime liaison officer to Arab guerillas who fled from Libya to Egypt, a leading legal expert on Islamic Family Law which he studied at Jami ‘at al-Qahira (in those days known as Jami ‘at Fu‘ad al-Awwal), the author of about 20 books (the first was written in Arabic and called *Al-Aql w‘al-Iman*) and at a later time the Lay Chairman of the Synod of the Church of England.

Sir Norman has not put his trust in any of the passing glories of this world, though I have mentioned a few of his attainments and could easily fill pages with more. He has trusted in God. His hope is suggested by this book’s title which derives from the Epistle of the Blessed Apostle Paul to the Romans 8:22 ff. “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved” (NI Version). Norman Anderson has known much pain and suffering in his long life but at the age of 77 he looks back and says: “As Christians our goal is sure and can never be frustrated. It is God’s eternal purpose that all

44. *Palladius: Dialogue*: 17
45. Kelly: *Jerome*: 243-6. Socrates: *HE*: 6:9
46. Socrates: *HE*: 6:15
47. Sozomen: *HE*: 8:17
48. Cheneau P: *Les Saints D'Egypte*. Jerusalem, 1923, Vol I: 148
49. Socrates: *HE*: 6:17
50. Selim Soliman: *A Short Account of the History of the Coptic Nation*. Cairo, 1914. (in Arabic)
51. El-Meskeen M: *Coptic Monasticism in the Age of St. Macarius*. Cairo, 1972.  
Shukry M: *Monasteries of the Natrun Valley*. Alexandria, 1962. (Both in Arabic.)
52. *Against Celsus. On Prayer. Exhortation to Martyrdom*.
53. By Father Tadros Malaty: twenty five volumes of this commentary appeared in 1983 and 1984.
54. Iris H. El-Masry: *Story of the Copts*. Cairo: The Middle East Council of Churches, 1978:43.



***THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BODY OF VIRGIN MARY***

By Poussin (1594-1665)  
National Gallery of Arts

Feast Day  
August 22