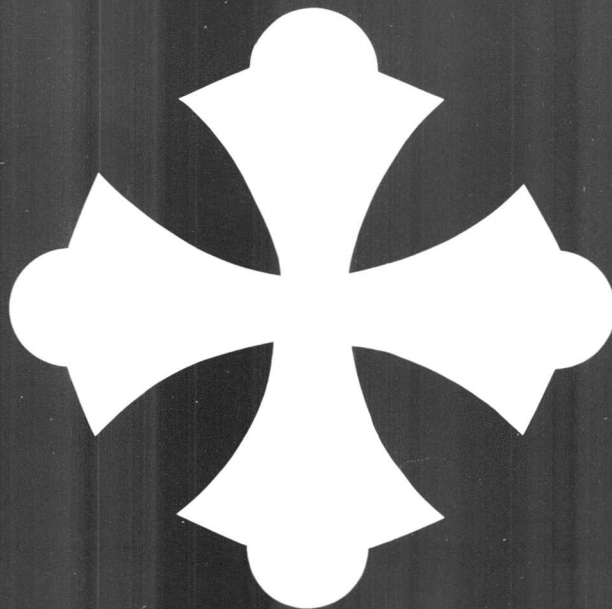


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 8, Number 2 Summer 1987

- *JOHN CLIMACUS: THE LADDER OF
DIVINE ASCENT*
- *A GREAT MOMENT IN THE HISTORY
OF ALEXANDRIA*
- *THE GOSPEL OF BARNABAS*



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue is introduced by *Dr. John Watson's* review of the famous classic of Orthodox spirituality, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. Bishop Kallistos Ware says, "With the exception of the Bible and the service books, there is no work in Eastern Christendom that has been studied, copied and translated more often than *The Ladder*. The popularity of *The Ladder* in the East equals that of *The Imitation of Christ* in the West." Father Watson is well known to the readers of this *Journal* through his articles on patristic and Coptic spirituality and on ecumenism.

In *A Great Moment in the History of Alexandria and Egypt*, William M. Hallisy tries to explore the heroic struggle of the Egyptian Christians during the third exile of Saint Athanasius the Great (AD 356-362). Mr. Hallisy, a member of *The North American Patristic Society*, is from Cleveland, Ohio. For the last thirteen years he has been studying the life and writings of St. Athanasius, hoping ultimately to publish all of the Patriarch's authentic works in English, in one set, along with a complete biography. He related to the editor that he has become a great admirer of the Coptic Church as a result of his studies.

Dr. Boulos A. Ayad continues his series on the Gospel of Barnabas. The article, *Christ's Divinity in the So-Called Gospel of Barnabas*, includes similar texts from the Koran and the forged gospel that deal with this main Islamic teaching. Dr. Ayad is Professor of Archaeology in the University of Colorado.

Saint Fam Coptic Association

Up till now, it has been extremely difficult to find books by Coptic theologians in English. Now, with the establishment of St. Fam Coptic Association in California, we have a publishing house that is specialized in these books. At the end of this issue of the *journal* the reader finds a list of some of the books available at present. Included are important theological books by H. H. Pope Shenouda III and by Fr. Tadros Malaty, some of which have been reviewed in previous issues of the *journal*. The books are printed in a fairly attractive format, and are distributed at a very bargain price.

Editor

JOHN CLIMACUS: THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT

A Study-Review

John Watson

Paulist Press, New York/Mahwah, U.S.A.; Edition of "The Ladder" 1982. Introduction by Bishop Kallistos Ware of Diokleia, Translation and Notes by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, Preface by Colm Luibheid. Pp. 303, \$9.95. Faber and Faber; Edition of "The Ladder" 1959. Introduction by Muriel Heppell, Translation by Archimandrite Lazarus Moore.

Alexandria fell in September 642 during the Arab Conquest of Egypt. For some years the deluge of the invading army had flooded the country. Many Christians accepted Islam.¹ Abba Benjamin I, the 38th Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria remained secure and was the first of many through the centuries who embodied in his own person the integrity of the Copts, in much the same way as Pope Shenouda III has done recently. It is said that the Arab Conqueror asked to see the Alexandrian Patriarch and, following the meeting, told his Arabs: "Truly, I have not seen a man of God so upright and so majestic in all the provinces . . ."² But we owe the preservation and conservation of the Christian Faith to the monasteries; built like forts in the desert, within their walls the monks and bishops maintained the liturgical life and the learning of Early Christianity.

Abbot John of Mount Sinai wrote the work under preview, we may safely assume, "when the convulsions of the time were near their highest. The work . . . vindicates (the) picture of Sinai as a haven of calm. Towering above the deluge like the Ark upon Ararat, it gives no hint of the political cataclysm, and speaks as for all time."³ This book of serene beauty and frightening austerity gave its name to its author: 'Klimax' is the Greek word for 'ladder' and Abbot (hegumen) John is known to the world as John Climacus. It seems certain that we know little more about the author of the "Ladder of Divine Ascent". It is probable that he was tonsured at Mount Sinai when only 16 years old. Three years later he retired to a hermit's life on the Gulf of Suez where he lived for forty solitary years. He was then elected hegumen at Sinai

where he wrote "The Ladder". It is probable that he died there circa. 649 A.D., not long after the events in Egypt referred to above. There is one incident in his forty years eremetical period which commands our attention, and to which we shall return; it seems that at some time, during his life on the banks of the Gulf of Suez, John Climacus made a pilgrimage to a large Coptic Orthodox monastery near Alexandria and that what he learned there had a lasting influence upon him.

A preliminary note about "The Ladder" is appropriate before we dip into its treasures: there are very few books in Christian history which have attained a position of authority which places them in the Christian Library alongside Holy Scripture but "The Ladder" is such a book. In our century it is still read every Lent in all Byzantine Orthodox monastic houses and it has been so popular amongst the laity that we know of early editions, or selections, in Arabic, Syriac, Armenian, Slavonic, Latin and other languages. Historically, and taking the widest possible ecumenical sweep, we may place it on our shelves with the Life of Abba Anthony of Athanasius, the Confessions of Augustine of Hippo, the Imitation of Christ by Thomas a Kempis and the Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan. This list is not exhaustive but it suggests the seminal importance of "The Ladder" which has been the most widely read guide to moral and spiritual perfection in the largest family of Orthodox churches for over a millenium. We are indebted to Dr. Muriel Heppell for her examination of the influence of "The Ladder"⁴: Symeon the New Theologian (circa 949-1022) admitted his debt to John and Dr. Heppell illustrates the influence of the work in the monastic life of Mount Athos, Serbia, Kiev (Russia), Yugoslavia, Roumania and, in more recent times in the West.

It is obvious that John was writing for monks but, like all books which have appealed to the living of the Gospel life in all its depth, the work has attracted a large audience outside religious houses. There are two particular reasons which may be advanced for the 'popularity' of "The Ladder". The first is related to the style of large parts of the book. An attractive, shrewd writer of good humour is revealed in the pages. John's visit to Egypt has been mentioned and it is not too much to say that he was probably influenced not only by the teaching of great Copts but that he absorbed the style of the "Sayings" of the Desert Fathers. The comment of Bishop Kallistos is pertinent:

"Because his aim is to impart a living, personal experience, John is often intentionally enigmatic. Like our Lord with His parables, like the Zen masters with their *koans* . . . John avoids spelling out his conclusions too plainly, for he wants the reader to work out the answer for himself."⁵

Far from being a commendation of obscurantism, this recalls not only the Desert Fathers but a characteristic of all great Folk literature through the ages.

The second attraction of the book lies in its simple scheme. The subject of Man's perennial quest for spiritual perfection is organized by reference to the image of Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28:10-22). This image had been a relatively popular one before John's time but he developed the image by giving the 'Ladder' thirty rungs

(the thirty chapters of the book), each rung representing one of the so-called "Hidden years of Christ" which led to the Lord's Baptism at the age of thirty. It is possible that the 30 Chapters are designed with such care that the reader who is not prepared will be deliberately 'put-off' at a fairly early stage.

It is the present writer's view that "The Ladder" should be read at once without the aid of such commentaries as are available: fortunately, no full critical edition of the text exists in English or any other modern language as far as I know. Brief and generally helpful summaries about John Climacus are available in English.⁶ It is likely that these contain all that we need to know when approaching the text. But this is a point where a warning is required. To sit down and read the book as one does a novel or even an academic book, as one perhaps often does, is certain to result in disappointment. This work was produced for contemplative attention by a reader who genuinely intends to change his life by applying the insights of a great ascetic to a new time and a different place. If it is true, as I have twice emphasized above, that this is a book for Christians 'living in the world', and that it has been profoundly influential amongst such readers, it is because it has been read slowly and carefully and applied successfully.

There are, as one must expect, a number of major themes which run through "The Ladder". The necessary discipline of space requires the present writer to confine himself to what he believes to be the overarching theme of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" and to limit allusions to the important teachings on Tears, Prayer and *Apatheia* to those places where a meeting of themes is natural and not forced, for it is upon one understanding that all that follows depends: the central theme of "The Ladder of Divine Ascent" is Repentance and Christian Death.

Penitence

It is now recognized that steps four and five on "The Ladder" are directly concerned with John's visit to the Coptic monastery near Alexandria; to see those men whom he calls "the warriors and athletes of Christ."⁷ We notice immediately that this is far from the monks' view of their vocation. They are penitents. Repentance is their vocation. "If you really want to live in the monastery", says the spiritual father, "I will put you down in to the ranks of the penitents." And these words are addressed not to a novice but to a monk who has committed a minor "sin" of gossiping. Speaking in general of the monastic life near Alexandria the author says:

"Obedience is a total renunciation of our own life, and it shows up clearly in the way we act. Or, again, obedience is the mortification of the members while the mind remains alive. Obedience is unquestioned movement, death freely accepted, a simple life, danger faced without worry, and unprepared defense before God, fearlessness before death, a safe voyage, a sleeper's journey. Obedience is the burial place of the will and the resurrection of lowliness. A corpse does not contradict or debate the good or whatever seems bad . . ."⁸

There can be few clearer statements of the Evangelical life than that: "Obedience is the burial place of the will and the resurrection of lowliness." The Christian, be he lay or monk, was invited to 'take up his cross' (Luke 9:23). It is surely fair to observe that the further we have moved in Time from the reality of Calvary the more insensitive and assertive the Church has become. The loud, amplified, guitar-twaning, liturgical banalities of 'modern' Christianity are a sure sign of pagan death and a loss of spiritual and theological integrity. Everywhere we find an over-confident, self-centered Church. By contrast, we see Climacus teaching that the more perfect one becomes, the more aware one is of one's own imperfection: "It is impossible", the desert ascetic writes, "for those of us who have fallen into the sink if iniquity ever to be drawn out of it unless we also plumb the depths of the humility shown by the penitent."⁹ This observation, expressed with such astonishing modesty, results from a visit made by John Climacus to a 'prison' for penitents of the monastery: "I saw them . . . it seems to me that those who have fallen and are penitent are more blessed than those who have never fallen and who do not have to mourn over themselves, because through having fallen, they have pulled themselves up by a sure resurrection."¹⁰ The same pattern of repentance, death to sin and resurrection recurs upon each rung of "The Ladder."

Vladimir Lossky has caught the motif of St. John of the Ladder accurately: "The soul which is not transformed by repentance does not know grace; and thus ceases to make progress in the way of ascent." Such a condition has been described as the 'insensibility of the heart of stone', a symbol of spiritual death. Lossky quotes from the seventh rung of "The Ladder": "When we die, we will not be criticized for having failed to work miracles. We will not be accused of having failed to be theologians or contemplatives. But we will certainly have some explanation to offer to God for not having mourned unceasingly." Lossky prefers the dramatic, and perhaps more effective translation of Fr. Derwas Chitty whose translation of the "Ladder" has not been published: "But we shall certainly have to give account before God because we have not wept unceasingly for our sins."¹¹

Living through the years with "The Ladder", as one lives with the Psalms and all Holy Scripture, it is necessary to remind ourselves that we may be 'ascending' but we have not 'ascended': "To be reminded of death each day is to die each day; to remember one's departure from life is to provoke tears by the hour. Fear of death is a property of nature due to disobedience, but terror of death is a sign of unrepented sins . . . Just as bread is the most necessary of all foods, so the thought of death is the most essential of all works."¹² I find the vivid contemporaneity of these centuries old perspectives compelling and disturbing. How different would the conduct of Synods, bishops and lay councils be if each participant shared the vision of himself as a being "sub speciae aeternitatis". How clear, memorable and full of good humour are the words of John Climacus: "The man who wants to be reminded of death and of God's judgment and who at the same time gives in to material cares and distractions, is like someone trying at the same time to swim and clap his hands!"¹³

I sit here, commending the insights and even to some extent the life style of a man separated from me by more than the passing ages. I wonder if the reader thinks that I am serious? It is the pinnacle of the Twentieth Century; the technology of our age brought me a telephone call from Seattle this morning and from Queensland, Australia last week. I belong here. Thomas Merton, the great Cistercian of Kentucky, who died in 1968, used to curse the cheese output of his monastery: 'Cheese production has replaced Cistercian contemplation'. More than one Copt has smiled wryly at the technology which overtook some 'Desert fathers'. I do not suspect my instinct which is that the priorities and values of Sinai are the correct ones for any Christian and at any time. But a great leap of imagination must be made or, as Peter Brown has put it, "the imagination itself must go to school. To recapture the fullness of human life in the past - or indeed at any time - harder qualities are called for."¹⁴ Professor Brown commends the proud intention of Benedict Spinoza: "I have laboured carefully, when faced with human actions, not to mock, not to lament, not to execrate, but to understand." Such labour must be taken to "The Ladder" and all the masterpieces of Patristics. John Climacus is my contemporary precisely because he experiences my most immediate experience, my fear and my only solution to the radical alienation of our time. The experience of the Seventh Century monk and the Twentieth Century priest are well stated by the distinguished English teacher of spirituality, Fr. John Byrom: ". . . for many the possibility and necessity of prayer are found to originate in a profound and manifold experience of dependence: the need to know; the need to love; the need for reconciliation with the holy; and the awesome sense of hanging every moment over an abyss of nothingness, the experience of radical contingency."¹⁵ John Climacus is one of the authentic band of Christians who has looked into the Abyss of meaninglessness and despair and discovered that the prayer of mature dependence is the only resort of the fearful: "The effect of Prayer is to hold the world together."¹⁶ This is not a random, gnomic utterance plucked from "The Ladder". It is a sentence expressing a profound existential view of life and though my world is one where bombs fall upon children, whilst John's world was one where a month's march across desert separated him from an army, we are not alone; we are not separated. We occupy the space of Christian realism. John Climacus, in Rung Six, tells this story: "This is what an Egyptian monk once said to me: 'If it ever happened that I was inclined to offer some comfort to this carcass of mine, the remembrance of death that had been so firmly established in my heart would stand before me like a judge; and - a wonderful thing - even if I wanted to push it aside, I simply could not do so.'¹⁶ In every age there have been those who have been wanting in seriousness and those who turned their backs on the abyss, not necessarily to lead a casual life but perhaps to deceive themselves by engaging in every kind of church activity except that which really matters, but Climacus, the "school of imagination" teaches us, was one who experienced "the awesome sense of hanging every moment over an abyss of nothingness" and found a balm in the experience of "radical contingency". As he

wrote: "Someone has said that you cannot pass a day devoutly unless you think of it as your last. Even the Greeks have said some such thing, because they describe philosophy as meditation on death. This then is the sixth step: He who has climbed it will never sin. "Remember your last end, and you will never sin" (Ecclus. 7:36).¹⁷ I have sought to emphasize the immediacy of "The Ladder" because the aim of the author is not to inculcate abstract doctrinal or theological teaching but to arouse, or confirm, an experience like his own. Patristics can only expect to command a small audience whilst it is completely preoccupied with philology and history, but when we read the Fathers as teachers in the School of Christian Existentialism the study takes on a new and urgent meaning:

"... all our compulsions meet,
Are recognized, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever by surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious."¹⁸

The Gift of Tears

The disciple who climbs the thirty rungs carefully has one aim; the integration of the whole self into the life of God. One indication that progress is being made is the gift of tears. We are grateful to Fr. John Chryssavgis of the Greek Archdiocese of Australia, who is the latest English-language writer on the Theology of Tears in St. John Climacus, for reminding us that the gift of tears is something natural to historical Christianity in Coptic monasticism and that "the gift of tears" distinguishes Christianity at first amongst the Desert Fathers from the ascetic or mystical traditions of other religions.¹⁹

In considering the gift of tears, which is the central theme for Climacus, we are dealing with the awesome and mysterious for which no systematic exposition is possible "... always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:10). Once again we are reminded that the way to resurrection is through the grave: within a church it is impossible to over-emphasize the burdens of carrying the cross.

'Tears' have a variety of meanings in "The Ladder" but of their place in the plan of Repentance there is no doubt. It is here that we find John Climacus most influenced by the Coptic monks of the Fourth Century. One dramatic instance from the life of Abba Arsenius the anchorite of Petra near Scetis will suffice:

"It was said of him (Arsenius) that he had a hollow in his chest channelled out by the tears which fell from his eyes all his life while he sat at his manual work. When Abba Poemen learned that he was dead, he said weeping, 'Truly you are blessed, Abba Arsenius, for you wept for yourself in this world! He who does not weep for himself here below will weep eternally hereafter; so it is impossible not to weep, either voluntarily or when compelled through suffering.' "²⁰

Another Coptic Father with an explicit doctrine of tears was Evagrius (circa A.D. 383): "Keep in mind the remembrance of these two realities. Weep for the judgement of sinners, afflict yourself for fear lest you too feel those pains."²¹ This finds a development in John Climacus (The Ladder: Rung 7) "If God in His love for the human race had not given us tears, those being saved would be few indeed and hard to find." Tears are God's gift according to Climacus and in this development he differs from Evagrius who is telling us to induce tears. But they would agree with the words of "The Ladder:" "trembling tears intercede for us, and the tears shed out of holy love show that our prayer has been accepted."²¹ Fr. Chrysavgis believes that the apparent difference between Evagrius, believing that tears should be brought on, and Climacus, seeing them as a gift, may be due to the fact that they are talking about different kinds of tears. Certainly, there is a mass of differing teaching upon tears in "The Ladder." But our contention that the central theme of the book is Repentance and Death is everywhere supported:

"When the soul grows tearful, weeps, and is filled with tenderness, and all this without having striven for it, then let us run, for the Lord has arrived uninvited and is holding out to us the sponge of loving sorrow, the cool waters of blessed sadness with which to wipe away the record of our sins. Guard these tears like the apple of your eye until they go away, for they have a power greater than anything that comes from our own efforts and our own meditation."²²

The emphasis of John Climacus is not on the tears themselves but upon a spiritual attitude of humility, repentance and sorrow for our sin: "Violence (cf. Matthew 11:12) and unending pain are the lot of those who aim to ascend to heaven . . . and this is especially at the early stages of the enterprise, when our pleasure-loving disposition and our unfeeling hearts must travel through overwhelming grief toward the love of God and holiness. It is hard, truly hard."²³

Prayer

In approaching the concluding notes on "The Ladder of Divine Ascent", the present writer wishes only that he has encouraged some to attend to the text itself. The theme which commands our attention is 'Prayer'. In Rung 28 of "The Ladder", St. John Climacus himself shows that he is aware of the extent to which the subject of 'prayer' influences the central motifs of Repentance and Death: "Some claim that prayer is better than the remembrance of Death."²⁴ But St. John believes that prayer and the remembrance of death form a unity. Prayer, stillness and the Invocation of the Holy Name are part of the dying to self-will which leads to the heights of the Ladder. "Prayer is by nature a dialogue and a union of man with God."²⁵ As we have suggested, it is universal in scope, the foundation of the universe itself: "Its effect is to hold the world together."²⁶ Prayer, as a foretaste of Heaven, is the end for which Man was created: as Climacus writes, "What higher good is there than to cling to the Lord and to preserve in unceasing union with Him?"²⁷ There is an Evangelical Protestant chorus which makes the point strongly:

“Prayer gently lifts me to highest Heaven,
From earth’s confusion to Jesus’ breast;
My sin and weakness, my doubt and sorrow,
Are lost for ever in sweetest rest.”²⁸

Climacus emphasizes Prayer as the center of the monastic life: “War reveals the love of a soldier for his king, and the time and practice of prayer show up a monk’s love for God. So your prayer shows where you stand. Indeed, theologians say that prayer is a monk’s mirror.”²⁹ The Russian, Bishop Theophan the Recluse (1815-94) has the most helpful summary: “Prayer is the test of everything . . . If prayer is right everything is right.”³⁰ Repentance should, therefore, naturally accompany every Christian in the ascent of the Ladder: “Even if you have climbed the whole ladder of the virtues, pray still for the forgiveness of sins.”³¹

It is an outstanding feature of some Christian prayer that it involves giving a mass of gratuitous information to God. Prayer is often reduced to mere garrulousness. As a confessor, the present writer has found many Christians who are fond of asserting their ‘maturity’ in the Christian life who are, at the same time, terrified of silence. John Climacus categorically rejects the loquacious - *polylogia* - the chatter and babble of words:

“Pray in all simplicity. The publican and the prodigal son were reconciled to God by a single utterance . . . Try not to talk excessively in your prayer, in case your mind is distracted by the search for words . . . brevity (*monologia*) makes for concentration.”³²

At first, John Climacus recognizes the need for words in prayer but he urges the reader to “enclose the mind within the words of your prayer; and if like a child, it gets tired and falters, raise it up again.”³³

The Jesus Prayer

“The Ladder of Divine Ascent” is following a well established tradition when it recommends the use of short prayers: “if some word evokes delight or remorse within you, linger on it.” One is reminded of research into the method of the Desert Fathers.³⁴ John Climacus was the first to use the term ‘Jesus Prayer’. It is interesting to note that this prayer has become so ubiquitous, even amongst people who know very little of Early Christianity and Orthodoxy, that it has even been a major theme in one of J. D. Sallinger’s important modern novels, “Franny and Zoey” in the U.S.A. The difficulty with the widespread recommendation of the prayer seems to me to be that the Jesus Prayer requires a context, and this must mean an Orthodox context, if it is to give real spiritual benefit. In fact, there are dangers in a general use without spiritual direction. John Climacus only refers to the Jesus Prayer three times and it cannot be viewed as a major theme of his teaching. But the three passages are important when viewed in their historical context.

In the 15th Rung of the Ladder, John says: “Let the remembrance of death and the concise Jesus Prayer go to sleep with you and get up with you, for nothing helps you

as these do when you are asleep.”³⁵ In the light of our main thesis about the book, we view sleep as an image of Death and its gates are entered here with the Holy Name on the lips or in the mind. It is established that Climacus, who does not mention the exact words of the Jesus Prayer as other writers do, linked the prayer with death and this suggests that he sees it as a prayer of contrition and repentance. The reader will hardly need reminding that the traditional form of the Jesus Prayer is, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me;” occurring in the Coptic text “The Life of Abba Philemon” for the first time in that structure.

In the 21st Rung, John discusses the fear that one might experience alone at night “. . . put on the armour of prayer, and when you reach the spot stretch out your hands and flog your enemies with the name of Jesus, since there is no stronger weapon in heaven or on earth.”³⁶ We can see that John is here concerned with the placing of one’s body in the form of the Cross and the Invocation of the Name of Jesus. Fr. Lev Gillet (1892-1980) wrote a booklet “*On the Invocation of the Name of Jesus*” under his usual pseudonym ‘a monk of the eastern Church’ where he provides a useful gloss on this second reference to the Jesus Prayer in “The Ladder”:

“ ‘ Save me, O God, by thy name.’ (Psalm 54:1), The Name of Jesus brings us more than His presence. Jesus is present in His Name as a Saviour, for the word ‘Jesus’ means just this; saviour or salvation. ‘Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12) Jesus began his earthly mission by healing and forgiving, i.e. by saving men. In the same manner the very beginning of the way of the Name is the knowledge of Our Lord as our personal Saviour. The invocation of the Name brings deliverance to us in all our necessities.”

This is to place the second reference to ‘remembrance’ of the Name in the “Ladder” very high for, if we accept Fr. Lev’s words, we stretch out our arms to receive ‘salvation’ from Sin and Death.

The final reference to the Jesus Prayer comes on the 27th Rung of the Ladder: “Stillness (*hesychia*) is worshipping God unceasingly and waiting on Him. Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with your every breath. Then indeed you will appreciate the value of stillness.”³⁷ That is the translation in the St. Paul’s 1982 Roman Catholic edition. It is worth noting the translation of an Orthodox (the Faber and Faber edition by Archimandrite Moore in 1959): “Solitude is unceasing worship and waiting upon God. Let the remembrance of Jesus (This patristic expression denotes the Prayer of Jesus and not the simple remembrance of the Name of Jesus) be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of solitude.”³⁸

This is not the place to engage in a detailed academic study of the place of breathing in prayer, however important that may be. A technique linking the rhythm of breathing is advanced in a Coptic source which is roughly contemporary with “The Ladder.” The Coptic reads: “Is it not easy to say with every breath, ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me; I bless Thee, my Lord Jesus, help me?’ ”³⁹ It is well

known that an advanced breathing technique became a prominent feature in the later teaching of the Greek Orthodox on Mount Athos and in St. Gregory Palamas. Professor Guillaumont has produced satisfactory evidence that the use of the Jesus Prayer in connection with breathing technique existed amongst the Copts some centuries before the Greeks.⁴⁰

This is far from being a technique of antiquarian interest. Bearing in mind the reservations made about undirected spiritual use of the Jesus Prayer, we should have no hesitation in resorting to the prayer. It is widely recognized that we live in a time of maximum Stress and Anxiety, using these words in a general and a technical sense. In response to the increase in Anxiety, high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and disillusioned with the automatic resort to drugs, Dr. Herbert Benson and Miriam Klipper of Harvard Medical School and Boston's Beth Israel Hospital produced a simple technique called "the relaxation response." They published their results in 1975.⁴¹ When the book came to my notice in that year I was immediately struck by their use of the Jesus Prayer as one of the "forms of words" required in their technique. Since that time Dr. Benson has continued his research. He is careful to emphasize that he has no intention to make pronouncements about the specific merits of any one belief system, but in 1985 he published his conclusion that a focus word or phrase was essential to his system and that faith heals for those who believe in the content of the words or phrases. Dr. Benson calls the combination of a Relaxation-Response technique with the individual's belief system "The Faith Factor." Benson is making no great claims but he is attempting to cross the bridge between traditional prayer and medical observation.⁴² I have allowed myself this brief excursus on what may be described as 'the medical value of ancient prayer' because it seems to me that we always put to one side the tried and tested at our peril. I once heard the late, saintly Archbishop Geoffrey Sambell of the Anglican Church in Australia give a paper, now possibly lost forever, on the 'therapeutic dimension' of Worship. It was one of the most impressive things I have ever heard. He emphasized that people come to church with stress, pain and problems and that they need a healing message because the Bible is a book of healing, the Blessed Sacrament is the Medicine of Eternal Salvation and Prayer is heavenly Peace on Earth. Archbishop Geoffrey emphasized the fact that Worship is too often noisy and damaging. The lesson of the doctrine of stillness, associated with the Jesus Prayer, and the doctrine of dispassion (*apatheia*) in Rung 29 is that prayer and contemplation are truly therapeutic. This is not the reason we undertake them but it is something which should not be ignored in what is probably the greatest Age of Anxiety through which mankind has passed.

Stillness

Stillness is experienced in deserts and caves and other places. Some of my happiest moments as a Christian were spent in the Nullarbor Desert of Western Australia. But John Climacus is aware of the inner meaning of stillness: the Chris-

tian does not necessarily dwell in spatial exclusion in the Desert but he holds in his body the powers of his soul, of his complete being. The holy wilderness is “within”. John Climacus would have applauded the much-quoted words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Dag Hammarskjöld, “The longest journey is the journey inwards.” The emphasis of “The Ladder” on stillness is that the monk’s true journey, and every monk is a ‘hesychast’, is not outwards and physical but spiritual and inwards. In Patristics, the classical formulation occurs in the Second Letter of St. Basil the Great:

“When the intellect is no longer dissipated among external things or dispersed across the world through the senses, it returns to itself; and by means of itself it ascends to the thought of God.”

In the hectic modern world, which even impinges upon the quietness of my village life, it is possible to attain some semblance of the preservation of interior silence. In Rung 3, John Climacus makes it clear that what he calls ‘exile’ is an aspect of the interior life and not a retreat from the world of practical reality:

“There is such a thing as exile, an irrevocable renunciation of everything in one’s familiar surroundings that hinders one from attaining the ideal of holiness. Exile is a disciplined heart, unheralded wisdom, and unpublicized understanding, a hidden life, masked ideals. It is unseen meditation, the striving to be humble, a wish for poverty, the longing for what is divine. It is an outpouring of love, a denial of vainglory, a depth of silence.”⁴³

This may go far to explain why the stillness of “Unpublicized understanding” may be more easily lived by a Hammarskjöld in a United Nations office in New York, which is dedicated to action, than it was for Merton in a Trappist Monastery which became a cheese factory or in a Retreat in Egypt’s Western Desert which is an Agricultural Research Centre! It is a wonderful thing to achieve true stillness in the isolation of a hermit’s cell, and no one would deny the fundamental importance of monasticism in the life of the Church which is essential for every country in the Orthodox diaspora and explains something of the poverty of Coptic Orthodoxy in countries like England which do not have a monastery, but it is uncomparably greater to have no fear or turmoil and, as Climacus says, “to remain steadfast under its assault with a fearless heart, living outwardly with men but inwardly with God.”⁴⁴

Recent reports indicate that Mount Athos and other centres of monasticism are receiving novices from countries as far away as Australia and the United States. We can gain some reassurance from the fact that there will still be men who will have heard “The Ladder of Divine Ascent” read forty or fifty times in their lives just as there have been such men for centuries. There will always be some ‘in the world’ who will at least read it once. There is a hunger, tragically ignored by the Church, for prayer and spiritual life. The Church so often seems preoccupied with its narrow

internal politics. Towards the end of his modern spiritual classic "*Le Milieu Divin*", Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin S.J. (1881-1955) commented on the fact that humanity is still imprisoned in its narrow loyalties. Then he wrote a prophecy: "A tremendous spiritual power is slumbering in the depths of our multitude which will manifest itself only when we have learned to break down the barriers of our egoisms and, by a fundamental recasting of our outlook, raise ourselves up to the habitual and practical vision of universal realities."⁴⁵

If we wish to be disciples of Christ, persons of stillness and prayer, learners from "The Ladder", then we have an immediate responsibility to be alert to all that is happening in the world. The authentic spiritual life has a polarity between stillness and action and the maintenance of some balance when the conflicts of such a life are so readily apparent. Climbing each Rung of the Ladder involves us in the life of stillness and more deeply in our appointed task in the world - doctor, psychiatrist, secretary, street-cleaner, journalist - making us more efficient, not separating us from others but uniting us to them and in the end we become living instruments of God's Peace for His world and dynamic centres of Reconciliation.

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A GREAT MOMENT IN THE HISTORY OF ALEXANDRIA AND EGYPT

William M. Hallisy

History tells us that Athanasius, Archbishop of Alexandria, was exiled from his see from 356-362 A.D. by the emperor, Constantius II. There was a price on his head and he lived "in hiding", presumably among the monks in the deserts of Middle Egypt. My, how this little sketch veils a very dramatic period in the history of Christianity! No hint, even, is given to the role the Egyptian Christians played, the role, indeed, that tipped the scales in favor of Christian truth.

In a typical, topsy-turvy way the History of Christianity is worked out in the strangest ways. The orthodox faithful in Alexandria and Egypt suddenly had no leader. They were not an intellectual elite capable of producing ideas to change the world, like the little-known leaders of 1776 in the New World. No, history preserves not even a single name of any great charismatic person who took control in Alexandria or Egypt in this time of persecution. It was a people defying the world, as usual in such cases, without the force of arms but only with faith. They were like the French Resistance of WWII but without arms. And the emperor had his S.S., the reknowned and all powerful Notaries¹ who were much like the Gestapo, only they had more power.

Let us set the scene: In the overall picture of the Roman Empire and the growing Christian Church within it, the years from 353 to 360 A.D. were the low point in the Church's history, and a period of apparent strong, central authority in the civil sphere, that gradually took near complete control of the Church. St. Jerome was to remark several decades later that it was as if one morning in the year 360 A.D. the Christian Church in the Roman World woke up to find itself Arian.² This new Arian church was in control everywhere, with the large notable exception of Alexandria and the fertile countryside along the Nile. The Arians in power there did not control anything really, but what did that little corner of the empire matter?

It mattered for everything! For in 360 A.D., the eve of apparent victory was the morning of real defeat. The Christian people of Alexandria and Egypt, ruled by an intrusive Arian bishop, who was supported by zealous civil and military persecutors, never surrendered their minds nor their allegiance; and they were numerous.

Very briefly let me sum up what little we know of the demographics of the time. Alexandria and suburbs was an area embracing about 300,000 people. In 328 A.D., when Athanasius became the bishop, the Christians numbered about 10% or 30,000. For the next seven years the Church grew wonderfully in his domain as well as in most of the rest of the empire. In 335 A.D. Athanasius was exiled to the West on a trumped up charge of treason. After a brief respite in 338 he was forced to flee again to the West, not returning until 346 A.D. From 346 to the beginning of the years we are considering here the growth began again in geometrical proportions. This growth was in numbers, to be sure, but more importantly, in depth. Quality in leadership filtered thru to quality overall. My own estimate of the orthodox population in Alexandria and its suburbs in the 350's A.D. is a minimum of 100,000 in a population of 400,000 and maybe more.

From 353 A.D. Constantius II was the sole emperor ruling from Spain and England to Armenia, from Ethiopia to the northern reaches of the Rhine and Danube. But he was afraid to move against his last, outspoken personal adversary, Athanasius of Alexandria. No doubt this was due in part to the intransigent quality of the man, but more so to the loyalty of the great number of people who composed his flock. And they were Egyptians! Native Copts and Greeks, and people of mixed blood. They were never a doormat for any outside ruler. Even today their heirs remain strongly independent of mind. They do not take lightly to the general assumption by the rest of the world that they are just another Arab people. Instantly they will respond that that is not true. They are the pharonic people, descendants of their last independent ancestors, the Pharaohs.

By the mid fourth century the Roman empire had been, unconsciously, eviscerated of its pagan ethos. Its culture had been stripped of its underpinnings; its philosophy proven bankrupt. Christianity was solely responsible for this. Early in the century Constantine, in as yet inexplicable way, had foreseen this eventuality and opted for Christianity as the new wave of a cultural renaissance. It was a most correct assumption, and his successor sons followed it. But the Gospel message is, and always will be, independent of any political and cultural identification. Nations, philosophies, cultures come and go but the Church survives them all.

Constantius II, his strongest son, could not brook any kind of ecclesiastical independence and sought to control the Church, much more so than his father. He had at hand the tool to do so in the heresy of Arianism. Arianism was an idea that took the mystery out of Christianity, lowered Christ the Son of God, but true God from true God, nevertheless, to the role of a great man, yes the greatest man, but man only, and not God, equal to the Father. This idea (and it is ideas that make the world go ultimately, e.g. the ideas of Marx today in a good part of the world) was quite compatible with, and amenable to an emperor who wanted no mystery, just absolute monarchical control. Arianism, a form of Christianity that makes Christ palatable, even to unbelievers, was the most pernicious idea to ever intrude into Christian history (up to Marxism perhaps).

Athanasius was present at its birth and fought it tooth and nail nearly to its death. Some eight years after Athanasius' passing its final execution took place at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. The ideas inherent in Arianism, however, have never died.

But by 360 A.D., with the backing of the supreme power of empire, it had attained complete dominance, even of the bishop of Rome, who succumbed indirectly while imprisoned in exile in Thrace. Only one public voice was known to oppose it, and oppose it diametrically, that of Athanasius of Alexandria, and no one knew where he was. Wait! That is not exactly true. Everyone knew where he was! In Egypt or The Thebaid (up the Nile), in hiding. Communication from him also kept cropping up here, there and everywhere. It was his most productive period for writing; nearly a dozen major writings stem from this period. This despite the fact that the Emperor was indignant and avid in ordering his apprehension. His most trusted henchmen were assigned to bring him in. *But these thousands of Egyptian faithful would not betray him, even at the cost of their lives.*

History has not given them credit. In its fickle way it concentrates on the broad picture, singling out individual persons, events, dates, to highlight great turning points in its story. But, in this case, the dogged resistance of the Alexandrian and Egyptian Christian community changed the course of Christian history, of Roman and European history.

Had Arianism triumphed, all historians agree, Christianity itself would have been bankrupt in the short run because it had no inherent staying power. Thus the defiant witness of the Alexandrian and Egyptian Christian people during the absence of, and the cruel pursuit of the elusive Athanasius, demonstrated to the whole Roman world that neither the mind of the Emperor, nor the sweeping resolutions of any number of pusilanimous Episcopal Synods could suppress the Trinitarian faith proclaimed at Nicea back in 325 A.D.

Greco-Roman history is the source of the term Pyrrhic victory (a victory on the surface but defeat afterall). Here again Roman history teaches us effectively. Very shortly after the triumph of Arianism, the Emperor, with his great idea, at the head of hundreds of legions, directing the most far flung central government of all human history, died.

And Athanasius reappeared among his people.

Julian, the new Emperor, was a megalomaniac Quixote in reverse. He took his eyes off Athanasius for a moment too long. The rest of the Christian world did not. It would be a gross distortion to say that the whole Christian world immediately looked to Athanasius for spiritual leadership, but something like that subconsciously occurred. On his return from hiding in 362 A.D. Athanasius held a quite ordinary meeting of some Egyptian bishops and a handful of others from other parts of the empire who had been exiled to Egyptian mines for not succumbing to Arianism. In this synod the essential Nicene faith was calmly asserted again and the hand of universal reconciliation went out to the Christian world, east and west. Arianism, a

huge inflated balloon hovering all over the Mediterranean shores, was punctured and fast losing all shape, its shadow fading even faster. The Trinitarian faith, though emasculated, rose from the fires like the Phoenix of Egyptian lore to live again in full glory. The tenacious spirit of the Egyptian people had, in crisis, protected and nurtured its spokesman and the faith itself. When the violence ended and the smoke cleared they were alone triumphant in the whole Roman world. If there was a Francis Scott Key observing the scene he would tell us "The flag was still there."

It is not surprising, for one who understands the Egyptian struggle in this tiny six or seven year epoch, in a still relatively unappreciated little corner of the Mediterranean, to know that this same people has survived through 1300 more years of Muslim domination. The Coptic Christian Church still lives today, a far from impotent component of Egyptian life and culture.

Notes:

1. Notaries were officially in charge of the Roman Postal Service and all travel. But Constantius II used them as a sort of spy network and on occasions employed them as enforcers of various "dirty" work.
2. Arianism, the first major heresy of the Church, taught that Christ was God's perfect creature. This implicit contradiction carried horrible conclusions, which St. Athanasius fought against his whole life.

CHRIST'S DIVINITY IN THE SO-CALLED GOSPEL OF BARNABAS

Boulos Ayad Ayad, Ph.D.

Introduction

The reader can notice from the text which I cited from the so-called Gospel of Barnabas that in this gospel Jesus denies his divinity, for this book is a Muslim book, not a Christian one. Its teaching agrees with the faith of the Muslim and the teaching of Islam.

The Koran of the Muslims denies in various sections that Jesus is the Son of God or one with God or God.

The following sentences from the Koran will illustrate this denial:

Denial of the Koran that Jesus Christ is God

The quotation below illustrates the Koran's denial of the divinity of Christ.

“They are unbelievers who say, ‘God is the Messiah, Mary’s son.’ Say: ‘Who then shall overrule God in any way if he desires to destroy the Messiah, Mary’s son, and his mother, and all those who are on earth?’ ”¹

Denial of the Koran that Jesus Christ is One with God

An example of the Koran's denial of Jesus' equality with God is given below:

“Say: ‘He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one.’ ”²

Denial of the Koran that Jesus Christ is the Son of God

The Koran teaches that Jesus is not the Son of God, as shown in the following quotation.

“ The Jews say, ‘Ezra is the Son of God’; the Christians say, ‘The Messiah is the Son of God.’ That is the utterance of their mouths, conforming with the unbelievers before them. God assail them! How they are perverted! They have taken their rabbis and their monks as lords apart from God, and the Messiah, Mary’s son — and they were commanded to serve but One God; there is no God but He; glory be to Him, above that they associate—desiring to extinguish with their mouths God’s light; and God refuses but to perfect His light, though the unbelievers be averse.”³

Denial of the Koran that God has a Son

As shown in the following quotation, the Koran denies that God has a Son.

"And say not, 'Three.' Refrain; better is it for you. God is only One God. Glory be to Him—that He should have a son! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth; God suffices for a guardian."⁴

The sentences which are cited in the following pages are from the Book of Barnabas, and have the same meaning as in the Koran:

From the Book of Barnabas

The following supports the belief of the Gospel of Barnabas that Jesus was not the Son of God:

"Verily I say unto you that, speaking from the heart, I tremble because by the world I shall be called God, and for this I shall have to render an account. As God liveth, in whose presence my soul standeth. I am a mortal man as other men are, for although God has placed me as prophet over the house of Israel for the health of the feeble and the correction of sinners, I am the servant of God, and of this ye are witness, how I speak against those wicked men who after my departure from the world shall annul the truth of my gospel by the operation of Satan."⁵

This supports the previous section:

"And God alone shall remain alive; to whom be honour and glory."

"And having said this, Jesus smote his face with both his hands, and then smote the ground with his head. And having raised his head, he said: 'Cursed be every one who shall insert into my sayings that I am the Son of God.' At these words the disciples fell down as dead, whereupon Jesus lifted them up, saying: 'Let us fear God now, if we would not be affrightened in that day.' "⁶

Jesus becomes angry when Peter declares him to be the Son of God:

"Jesus answered: 'And ye; what say ye that I am?'"

Peter answered: 'Thou art Christ, Son of God.'

Then was Jesus angry, and with anger rebuked him, saying: 'Begone and depart from me, because thou art the devil and seekest to cause me offense!'

And he threatened the eleven, saying: 'Woe to you if ye believe this, for I have won from God a great curse against those who believe this.'

And he was fain to cast away Peter; whereupon the eleven besought Jesus for him, who cast him not away, but again rebuked him, saying: 'Beware that never again thou say such words, because God would reprobate thee!'

Peter wept, and said: 'Lord, I have spoken foolishly; beseech God that he pardon me.' "⁷

Here again Jesus denies his divinity:

“At that time we with Jesus, by the word of the holy angel, were gone to Mount Sinai. And there Jesus with his disciples kept the Forty days and when this was past, Jesus drew nigh to the river Jordan, to go to Jerusalem. And he was seen by one of them who believed Jesus to be God. Whereupon, with greatest gladness crying ever: ‘Our God cometh!’ and having reached the city he moved the whole city saying: ‘Our God cometh, O Jerusalem; prepare thee to receive him!’ And he testified that he had seen Jesus near to Jordan.” . . . “And when he had said this, the crowd drew nigh, and when they knew him they began to cry out: ‘Welcome to thee, O our God!’ and they began to do him reverence, as unto God. Whereupon Jesus gave a great groan and said: ‘Get ye from before me, O madmen, for I fear lest the earth should open and devour me with you for your abominable words!’ Whereupon the people were filled with terror and began to weep.”⁸

Jesus’ grief because the people called him God:

“Jesus answered: ‘Believe me, Barnabas, that I cannot weep as much as I ought. For if men had not called me God, I should have seen God here as he will be seen in paradise, and should have been safe not to fear the day of judgement. But God knoweth that I am innocent, because never have I harboured thought to be held more than a poor slave. Nay, I tell thee that had I not been called God I should have been carried into paradise.’ ”⁹

Conclusion

In the so-called Gospel of Barnabas Jesus denies his divinity. However, according to the Christian faith, He Himself declares on different occasions in the four Gospels that he is the Son of God, one with God, and God. The Old Testament also prophesies His coming. The reader will find here some of these quotations.

Christ Declares Himself the Son of God and God

Here our Lord makes clear the fact that he is the Son of God.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.”¹⁰

Christ the Son of God and God

Below is another quotation from the Bible which illustrates the fact that God and Jesus are one.

“Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, “I said, you are gods?” If he called them gods to whom the words of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken) do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world,

'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.' ""¹¹

Christ the Son of God and One with God

The following section makes clear the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and one with God.

"The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the sake of the works themselves.' ""¹²

Old Testament Verses Concerning Christ as the Son of God

The Old Testament contains prophecies concerning the coming of Christ, the Son of God.

"The words of Agur son of Jakeh of Massa. The man says to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal: Surely I am too stupid to be a man. I have not the understanding of a man. I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name? Surely you know!""¹³

Another verse with the same meaning follows:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (That is God with us.)""¹⁴

Another prophecy of the coming of Jesus as the Son of God and God is given below:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.""¹⁵

From the quotations of the Book of Barnabas we can say that many of the teachings of this book are identical to the teaching of the Koran. A number of ideas which occur in the so-called Gospel of Barnabas have been borrowed from the Koran, proving that the Gospel of Barnabas is not a Christian book and has no connection with the Christian faith.

Notes

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3. Ibid., Chapter 9, Repentance: 30-31.
4. Ibid., Chapter 4, The Women: 169.
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6. Ibid., Chapter 53.
7. Ibid., Chapter 70, see also *ibid.*, Chapters 138, 69, 91.
8. Ibid., Chapter 92, see also *ibid.*, Chapter 93.
9. Ibid., Chapter 112:8-22.
10. *The Holy Bible (Revised standard version)* New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1952) Jn. 10:27-30; see also Mt. 11:25-30; Ibid., 26:62-66; Mk. 14:60-64; Lk. 10:21-22; Ibid., 22:66-71.
11. Ibid., Jn. 10:34-38.
12. Ibid., Jn. 14:10-11.
13. Ibid., Prov. 30:1-5.
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BOOK REVIEWS

The Copts in Egyptian Politics

By B. L. Carter. Croom Helm, London, Sydney, Dover New Hampshire. 1986. Twenty-five pounds Sterling. Pp. 328, hardcovers.

All students of Coptic Orthodoxy are indebted to the publishers of this volume for venturing into an area which is seriously neglected. It is a pity that Croom Helm did not edit this title because it is inaccurate and does not convey the contents of the book to the reader. This is a study of the Coptic minority between 1918 and 1952 and it is valuable for that alone. It says nothing about recent events in the Church and Egypt and some readers will be misled by the title.

Barbara Lynn Carter is a Social Scientist working with a private consulting firm in the Yemen. She has a command of relevant literature which must be the envy of many Europeans. This book is an academic thesis and the author has decided to adopt an attitude towards the Copts which is conditioned by sociological insights, particularly those of Frederik Barth. Those readers who are skeptical about the whole field of the so-called Sociology of Religion will not be reassured by this work. It ignores the spiritual well-springs of Coptic Orthodoxy without which, in this reviewer's view, the sociological aspect is incomprehensible. In short, something must be taken to this advanced study to make sense of many innuendoes.

The examination of the Wafd party and of Coptic influence in it is convincing. Less happy are some of the judgements upon individuals like Salama Mousa. Because of the author's reliance upon persons like Mirrit Boutros Ghalli, who is acknowledged with others, the story often reads like that of the bland in search of the bland. Too many rough ways have been made plain and too many hills lowered. There is a harsher and more violent side to the story than this sociologist is prepared to reveal. Of course, she may have been misled but the bibliography suggests otherwise. It is quite extraordinary that political violence is passed over in this account of Coptic history. But the conclusions of Ms. Carter often have the ring of truth as for example when she says of the Copts: "Men who possessed the talent for politics or diplomacy were consigned to a career in business . . . Many worked hard to obtain a good education only to be denied the rewards which were earned so easily by Muslim colleagues. Ultimately, the Assistant Oriental Secretary's 1937 conclusion was perhaps pessimistic but not wrong: as long as the Copts were content to remain underdogs and not to aspire to power, Islam would prove tolerant."

The study ends with the rise of Nasser when it was true that the communal violence ceased for a time though equality remained as distant a notion as ever. The deteriorating situation since then will, perhaps, be the subject of a further study by this writer, for her book is in literate, academic English and there are too few books on the Copts which could claim as much. The publishers should be encouraged to publish in this field, even though the book is extremely expensive and has a typed-face and no justified margins.

*Sutton Valence School
Kent, England*

John Watson

Coptologia

An International Journal of Coptology and Egyptology, Volume VII.

Edited by F. M. Ishak, Ph.D. Thunderbay, Ontario: Lakehead University, 1986. Pp. 136. \$8.50 (US), \$10.00 (Canada).

The 1986 volume of *Coptologia* is dedicated to the memory of the famous and tireless Coptologist Yassa Abdel-Masih (1898-1959). It contains a short biography, a list of his publications and two of his articles. The first, *Evolution of the Coptic Language*, studies its history, dialects, literary heritage and ancient and modern linguistic references. The second article discusses the life and works of the tenth century Coptic scholar *Anba Sawiris ibn al-Muqaffa, bishop of al-Ashmunain*.

Included in this issue of *Coptologia* are other articles on Coptic, theological, monastic and manuscript studies. Two articles deal with Coptic Saints: *Apa Klog of al-Fant* and *Anba Abraam of Faiyum*. An interesting article describes a visit by Otto F. A. Meinardus to the village of Qimn al-Arus, where St. Antony the Great was born.

The Coptic Orthodox Church as a Church of Erudition and Theology.

By Father Tadros Y. Malaty. Ontario, Canada: St. Mary Orothodox Church (P.O. Box 6970, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada), 1986. Pp. 304 (in English and Arabic). No price.

This book paints a marvelous picture of the scholarship in the Coptic Church during the first five centuries of the Christian era. It summarizes the biography and writing of a series of illustrious churchmen; some were heads of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, others were Patriarchs of Alexandria.

Father Malaty does not simply retell the story of these Fathers. But he does original research in all sections of the book with extensive references that have exceeded one hundred in some of them. The book reveals the author's theological learning and awareness, not only of the Fathers but also of the modern patristic scholarship. He defines and explains some mistakes which have been propagated especially

in recent years among Western theologians concerning the teaching of the Coptic Fathers. In a separate chapter, Father Malaty refutes the attitude of some scholars who find Apollinarian elements in the writings of St. Athanasius and St. Cyril. In another chapter he answers the charge of Eutychianism raised against St. Dioscorus. He also addresses the recent trends that regard Nestor as essentially orthodox in his christology.

BOOKS RECEIVED

St. Mary and St. Mena Coptic Orthodox Church of Rhode Island (8 Pendleton Street, Cranston, RI 02920)

St. Athanasius' Theology: Articles for Today-Redemption. By Fr. Matthias F. Wahba, 1987 Pp. 48 (English and Arabic). No price.)

Selected quotations from the work of the great Church Father dealing with redemption and arranged topically into the sections of Creation and Fall, the Need for Redemption, Incarnation, Nature of Redemption and its Fruits.

St. Athanasius' Theology: Articles for Today-Resurrection. By Fr. Matthias F. Wahba, 1987. Pp. 48 (English and Arabic). No price.

Selected quotations from St. Athanasius dealing with the power of Christ's Resurrection and its fruits for humanity.

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. (Grand Rapids. Michigan)

Last Supper and Lord's Supper. By I. Howard Marshall, 1981. Pp. 191. \$6.95 (paperback)

A survey on the accounts of the Last Supper and other eucharistic teachings in the New Testament, from a Protestant standpoint.

All Nature Sings. By Margaret Clarkson, 1986. Pp. 138. \$11.95 (hardcover); \$5.95 (paper).

From familiar portraits of nature, the author takes off to meditate on heavenly and scriptural realities.

The Fourth Day. By Howard J. Van Till, 1986. Pp. 286. \$9.95 (paper).

A scientist integrates Scripture exegesis and scientific investigation into a coherent, unified perspective on the cosmos and describes how both views complement each other.

Paulist Press (New York/Mahwah)

Yoga and the Jesus Prayer Tradition. By Thomas Matus, 1984. Pp. 193. \$8.95.

A Roman Catholic monk finds in the mystic experience of the Byzantine saint Symeon the New Theologian how the body and the senses cannot be separated from the soul in the practice of meditation.

God of Surprises. By Gerhard W. Hughes, S. J., 1985. Pp. 176. \$9.95.

A guidebook for the spiritual life basing its stages on the parable of the treasure in the field and addressing the problems faced by modern man in his life with Christ.

Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow. By Marsha Sinetar, Ph.D., 1987. Pp. 195. \$7.95.

A fresh way of looking at work, not in its material value but as a time of joy, love and devotion, achieved through listening to one's call and fostering confidence and self-esteem.

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Ottawa (P.O. Box 6970, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2A 3Y6)

God. By Father Tadros Y. Malaty, 1986. Pp. 40. No price.

The belief in one God and in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as explained in Scripture and by the Church Fathers with a summary of the teaching of the early Alexandrian Fathers in this regard.

The Coptic Orthodox Church and the Dogmas. By Father Tadros Y. Malaty, 1986. Pp. 12. No price.

The importance of theology for Church life with comments on contemporary theological problems and modern movements.

COPTIC ORTHODOX BOOKS IN ENGLISH

Books by H. H. Pope Shenouda III

Salvation: An Orthodox Concept	\$3.00
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100 Words of Spiritual Benefit - 2	\$2.50
Life of Thanksgiving	\$1.25

Books by Rev. Father Tadros Malaty

Christ in the Eucharist	\$3.00
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Saint Mark	\$1.00
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<i>S. Hanna: The Chosen Twelve</i>	\$1.00
<i>Pearl Zaki: The Lord's Mother Visits Egypt</i>	\$1.50

Children's Books by Father T. Malaty

Jesus Loves Me	\$1.00
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Poor Woolly	\$1.00
The Holy Spirit Dwells in Me	\$1.00
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