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AN INTRODUCTION

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Ethiopic Christian Literature

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BY

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PREFACE

THE present brief work is not intended to be more than is expressed in its title an Introduction to Ethiopic Christian Literature. It is not meant for Ethiopic scholars, but its purpose is to give as simple an account as possible of the Literature with which it deals. Hence its method. It seemed necessary to say something, first of all, of the language and the general history of the Church and country, which, to say the least, are not at all well known. Then follows a brief sketch of the literature as a whole. The concluding chapters deal each with one department of the literature, commencing with the Bible. In these later chapters I have chosen for description such books as seemed to me to be of most general interest, or most typical of their class. My intention has been rather to show the general character of Ethiopic Literature than to describe all the works fully. Of a few other works, chiefly such as have not yet been edited, I have given a very brief account in one of the Appendices. The materials I have drawn from many different sources, but in writing Chapters ii and iii I am particularly indebted to Enno Littmann's *Geschichte der äthiopischen Litteratur*, which itself forms the last part of the *Geschichte der christlichen Litteraturen des Orients* (Leipzig, 1909), the first three parts treating respectively of the Literatures of the Syriac, Armenian and Coptic Churches.

As I have not always indicated my indebtedness to Littmann, I here desire to do so at the beginning.

A word must be said about the Ethiopic names and words which had to be used. The Ethiopic alphabet, as explained more fully in Chapter I, follows the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabets, except for the addition of four letters, two of which are of rare occurrence and are nowhere transliterated in this book. I have followed the usual method of transliteration. The only letters requiring remark are, I think, the following: *Teth* is ṭ; s stands for two letters, corresponding to *samech* and *sin*[1] in Hebrew, ḥ and ṣ stand each for two letters, namely, *ḥeth* and *ṣade* of the Hebrew alphabet, and the two additional letters in Arabic which correspond with these. As the two letters in each of these three groups are of identical sound in Ethiopic (at least in modern times), it seemed unnecessary to multiply symbols to distinguish them from each other.

Aleph (*alf*) and *'ayin* (*'ain*) are respectively represented by the smooth and rough breathing, except in the case of words beginning with *alf*, in which the breathing has been omitted. The word Geez I have treated as English; it might have been written Ge'ez.

As to the vowels, *i*, *o*, *u* are always long; *a* and *e* may be long or short. I have marked them in Ethiopic words, when long, by the circumflex accent.

J. M. H.

[1] Not *shin*; there is no 'sh' in Ethiopic.

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CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY AND LANGUAGE

THE name Ethiopia has been used in many senses, but, as it is employed in the history of the Christian Church, it means the country otherwise known as Abyssinia. This country, in its widest extent, stretches from the modern Italian colony of Eritrea on the shores of the Red Sea in the north through more than ten degrees of latitude to British East Africa on the south, and from Somaliland on the east to the Soudan on the west. The divisions of the country, which are most convenient to remember, are Tigrê in the north; Amhara, the great table-land and mountainous region in the centre; Shoa, south, or rather south-east, of Amhara; and, furthest south of all, the land of the Galla tribes.

The name Abyssinia comes to us from Arabic writers who speak of the land of Habash, a name which was possibly that given by the Egyptians to some primitive African race. The name given to the country by the Christian inhabitants was Ethiopia. It has no direct connexion with the Ethiopia of classical writers, and with the Ethiopia of the Bible it is also unconnected, except that its adoption was no doubt due to a desire on the part of the Church of Abyssinia to trace back its own history to biblical times.

The language of the Church was, as we shall see, Semitic, but it was the language of a minority. Most of the inhabitants were not of Semitic stock. The earliest were of Negro race. Then in pre-historic times there was an immigration of Hamitic tribes who find their modern representatives in the Somali and Danakil tribes in the north and east; the Oromo, or Galla, in the south; and the Agau in the centre. The Falashas also, in spite of their Jewish faith, are said to be of Hamitic stock.[1]

Ethiopic Church Literature is much more concerned with a second and much later immigration. This was of Semitic tribes who crossed over from South Arabia, probably by the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb. They did not come all at once, but at different dates. Of the tribes who came two chief groups are to be distinguished, the Geez, who settled more to the north in the neighbourhood of Axum, and the ancestors of the Amhara, whose settlements were further south on the east and south-east of Lake Tsana. It is not known at what date these settlements were made, but it must have been before the Christian era.

It is the evidence of the language that shows that the immigration was from South Arabia. The Ethiopic, or more correctly, the Geez language, is allied to Arabic, but is far more closely akin to the language of the Sabean or Himyaritic inscriptions which have

[1] Stern, however, says (see *Life*, etc., by Isaacs, p. 195). 'In physiognomy most of the Falashas bear striking traces of their *Semitic* origin.' The Falashas themselves trace their descent to the Hebrews who came to Ethiopia with the Queen of Sheba in the time of Solomon.

been found in South Arabia.[1] These are very numerous, and have been preserved from various dates, from long before the Christian era (1000 B.C.) till about A.D. 600.[2] The characters too of the Geez alphabet are obviously a development of the Sabean; in fact two of the earliest inscriptions extant in Geez are written in Sabean letters.[3]

Some remarkable changes in their method of writing were afterwards made by the Semitic tribes who came over to Africa. In the first place they began to write from left to right, instead of from right to left as in Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, and even in the Sabean inscriptions. This change was probably due to Greek influence. Besides this they developed an original and most ingenious system of vocalization. It is well known that in the other Semitic languages the consonantal system is entirely distinct from the vowels. In Arabic, Hebrew, or Aramaic the consonantal text may be pointed or unpointed, that is to say, the vowels may or may not be added. In the former case the vowels are denoted by dots, strokes, or other marks, above, in, or below the consonants. In Ethiopic, on the other hand, the form of the consonant itself is slightly modified according to the vowel with which it is to be sounded. Each consonant has at least seven different forms,[4] for example, the character for 'b' may be so written as to express *ba*,

[1] Amharic too is essentially Semitic. [2] *Littmann*, p. 189.
[3] Cf. Noldeke, *Die Semitischen Sprachen*, p. 68.
[4] Four of the consonants (q, h, k, g) have five additional forms to mark the insertion of the letter 'u' between the consonant and its vowel. For example, in the case of 'k' the five additional forms express kua, kui, kuâ, kuê kue.

bi, *bu*, *bâ*, *bê*, *be*, or *bo*, the sixth of the forms ('orders' is the technical word) being used also for 'b' as a vowel-less consonant. From this ingenious system it results that an Ethiopic document is always 'pointed,' and so far therefore easier to read than an unpointed text in another Semitic language. The system has however one or two disadvantages compared with pointed texts. In the first place there is no mark like the *dagesh forte* in Hebrew to indicate when the consonant is to be doubled; and secondly, there is no outward mark of distinction between a vowel-less consonant and the same consonant followed by a short 'e;' the sign for '*b*' and *be* is the same and so with all the other letters.

The alphabet consists of twenty-six characters. Of these, twenty-two are identical in nature, and the majority also in name, with the corresponding letters of the Hebrew and Syriac alphabets. In some cases where there has been a change of name, it is hard to say why the change has been made, in others the reason is obvious. The name *yod*, for example, was abandoned because the Ethiopic word for 'hand' does not begin with that letter. A word of similar meaning was therefore substituted, and the letter called '*yaman*' (i. e. right hand). Similarly *nun* was given up, and '*nahas*' (meaning, serpent) substituted in its place. This was not in every case consistently done, for '*af*' (=mouth) was retained as the name of the letter called '*pe*,' '*fa*,' etc., in the other Semitic languages. This, however, is the only exception to the rule that the name of the letter should begin with the corresponding sound.

Of the four additional letters, two, representing different sounds of ' p,' are of very rare occurrence, being chiefly used in words borrowed from other languages such as Greek. The two remaining are also found in Arabic, and represent an earlier stage of the Semitic alphabet, in which there were two forms of the letters *ḥeth* and *ṣade* which were afterwards merged into one by the Hebrews and Arameans.

The Ethiopic or Geez language is not now spoken. It is quite unknown when it ceased to be used as the language of daily life. Possibly it was about the tenth century. It continued in use, in a more or less debased form, for several centuries longer as a literary language. At present it is used merely as the ecclesiastical language, and is, it is said, unintelligible even to many of the priests.

It has, however, its modern representatives in daughter or kindred languages. Two, which may be described as daughter languages of Geez, are still spoken in the north of the country, including the Dahlak Islands in the Red Sea. Of these two languages or dialects, the first is known as Tigrê, the second as Tigray or Tigriña. Better names would be northern and southern Tigrê. Tigrê, which is not spoken in Tigrê proper, but further north and chiefly by Moslems, is more closely related to Geez than is Tigriña which is spoken in Tigrê further south. Both of these are essentially Semitic languages, though both contain Hamitic elements.[1]

Better known than either of these is Amharic,

[1] Cf. Noldeke, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–2.

which is said to be the most widely spoken, next to Arabic, of all the Semitic languages which are still in use. Amharic has been in Abyssinia the language of the court and state since about the end of the thirteenth century. The natural result was that during the centuries that followed, though Geez was still the language of literature and the Church, it was much influenced by Amharic, chiefly in the way of vocabulary, many of the later works containing numerous loan-words borrowed from the kindred dialect. Indeed, as we shall see later, in one department of literature—the *Royal Chronicles*—a kind of compromise was effected, and a hybrid dialect, a mixture of Geez and Amharic, was employed.

The Geez language was quite unknown in Europe till the end of the fifteenth century, when Portuguese travellers visited the country, attracted thither by legends as to the famous Prester John. The next century saw envoys from the same country in Abyssinia, soon followed by Jesuit missionaries who endeavoured to introduce a Roman form of Christianity, but had no lasting success.

All our knowledge of the language, and therefore of the literature, depends ultimately on the efforts of two German scholars, one in the seventeenth century, and the other in the nineteenth. The first of these was Leutholf, or Ludolf, as he is generally called, who published in 1661 an *Ethiopic Lexicon and Grammar*. He afterwards improved both of these and wrote a History of Ethiopia and a commentary thereon. A century and a half later there was a revival of interest in the language and literature, originating

in and promoted by the work of the great German scholar Aug. Dillmann. During the nineteenth century also much extra material was made available. Many manuscripts had been brought from the country by missionaries like Krapf and Bruce. The British expedition against Abyssinia in 1868 was the occasion of a great influx of fresh literary material.

CHAPTER II

BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE COUNTRY AND CHURCH

VERY little is known of the history of the country prior to the introduction of Christianity beyond the fact that kings of Semitic stock bore rule there from at least the first century A.D. Their capital was at Axum. It is from these kings that the inscriptions come which have been already mentioned in the preceding chapter. The first of these inscriptions is bi-lingual (Greek and Ethiopic) and tells of the wars of a king named 'Aizana. The second is in Ethiopic only, and comes from the reign of Ela-'Amida. These belong to the fourth century and in them the writing runs from right to left contrary to the method which prevailed later. In two inscriptions of a king Tazana dating from the first years of the following century the new method is already in use. Who preceded these kings, or how far back their dynasty goes are matters of which we have no knowledge. The traditions, or rather legends, of the later Christian Church of Abyssinia, for example, those that are found in the Kebra Nagast (see below p. 87 ff.) date back the origin of the kingdom to before the time of Solomon. A king of Ethiopia according to those legends was a son of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Needless to say this is all pure imagination.

The traditional story of the conversion of Ethiopia to Christianity rests on a better basis, and has often been told. The story depends in the main on the testimony of Rufinus, the friend (and enemy) of St. Jerome. It has been repeated after him, with some variations, by various writers. The ecclesiastical historian Socrates gives it as follows. A philosopher of Tyre, Meropius by name, desired to visit the land of the Indians. He took with him two youths and set sail for the country. When he had seen all that he wished, he was returning, but had to put in for provisions at a harbour on the coast. It so happened that at that time there was war between the Indians and the Romans. The Indians therefore seized the philosopher and his companions, and put them all to death except the two boys. Them they saved alive as a gift for their king. He was delighted with the appearance of the lads, and (apparently after some time had elapsed) made one of them whose name was Edesius his cup-bearer, and appointed the other Frumentius as his treasurer. When on his deathbed, the king (whose name, according to Ludolf, was Abreha) gave both of them their freedom. They remained on, however, in the country at the request of the queen as tutors of her son (Erazanes,[1] according to Ludolf) until he came of age. Frumentius, while thus engaged, was in the habit of seeking out the Roman traders who visited the country, and of assembling them, if he found any to be Christians,

[1] The names of the king and his son given in the Ethiopic *Senkesar* are, Ela-Alada and Ela-Azguâguâ. (Cf. Basset, *Etudes sur l'Histoire d'Ethiopie*, p. 220.)

for divine worship. Eventually he built a church, and began to teach the natives. When the young prince came of age, Frumentius and Edesius, having given a good account of their stewardship, asked and received permission to leave the country and return home. Edesius then went to Tyre to visit his friends, but Frumentius did not go further than Alexandria. There he came into touch with St. Athanasius, who had but a short while before been elected bishop, and recounted the story of his travels and sojourn in Ethiopia, and his hopes for the conversion of the Indians. He begged Athanasius to send thither a bishop and other clergy to work amongst them. Judging that Frumentius was the most suitable person for the work, Athanasius consecrated him bishop at once and sent him back again to the country, where he laboured, won converts, built churches and worked miracles. This story Rufinus claims to have heard from the lips of Edesius himself. In the Ethiopic *Senkesar* the names of the two chief actors appear in a somewhat disguised form as Frementos and Adeseyos, the former being also known as Abbâ Salâmâ.

If the date given in the above account can be relied on, Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia in the second quarter of the fourth century. Others however put the date later. It was, in any case, more than a century later that the 'Nine Saints' arrived. Their coming must be put somewhere about the end of the fifth century. Their names are variously given.[1]

[1] The three most often mentioned are, Aragâwi (Mikâ'êl), Garimâ, Panṭalêwon.

All but one have Ethiopic names, Pantaleon being Greek. These Saints were probably Syrian monks, who reached Abyssinia by way of Egypt or South Arabia, having left their country probably on account of the troubles that followed the promulgation of the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon. It was possibly in consequence of their teaching, but also, in part, because of its close connexion with Alexandria, that the Church of Abyssinia has always been strongly, not to say fanatically, monophysite. The connexion with Alexandria has always been closely maintained, the *Abuna* or metropolitan of Abyssinia being always an Egyptian, consecrated and sent to rule the Ethiopic Church by the monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria.

The darkness which not unnaturally surrounds the history of the country all through these early times does not clear till we come nearly to the end of the thirteenth century. Two facts may, however, be mentioned about which we have some information, either from outside sources or from the traditions of the Ethiopic Church itself.

The first is that during the earlier half of the sixth century the Christians of Abyssinia made various expeditions to South Arabia to succour their fellow-Christians who were being subjected to persecution. The Abyssinians themselves have but a confused knowledge of these campaigns, and the details found in other historians are often contradictory, but as to the fact of such expeditions having taken place, there can be no reasonable doubt. The hero of these wars is a king of Axum whose name appears in various

forms which are ultimately reducible to two, Caleb, evidently his personal name, and Elesbaan, a surname, probably a corruption of a word meaning 'blessed.'[1] Elesbaan came to the throne some time before A.D. 518. At that time the Christians in Yemen (South Arabia) were subject to a king named Dhu Nowas (Dunaan) who had, after his accession to the throne, adopted the Jewish faith, and was endeavouring to spread the same by force amongst his subjects. Elesbaan first sent embassies to protest against his cruelties, but, finding these useless, determined on war. He crossed the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, defeated the tyrant, drove him from his country, and, when he himself returned home to Abyssinia, left a viceroy to rule the country. A few years later, when this viceroy died, Dhu Nowas left his place of retreat, gathered an army together, and attacked Nejran which was the headquarters of the Abyssinian power in Yemen. He eventually became master of the city by treachery and massacred all the inhabitants who refused to abjure their faith. Some fugitives who escaped spread throughout the East the news of the massacre, and the Patriarch of Alexandria urged Elesbaan to invade Yemen again to avenge the wrongs of the Christians. This he did, and this time the tyrant was defeated and slain.[2] After his victories Elesbaan is said to have abdicated and retired into seclusion as a hermit. He has been canonized not

[1] Most of the later kings of Abyssinia had also two, or even three names, see the extract from the *Chronicle* of Yoḥannes I given in chapter vii.

[2] According to another account he committed suicide.

only by his own Church but also by the Church of Rome (October 27).

The second fact that stands out during these years of darkness is the fall of the so-called Solomonic line of kings who reigned at Axum. The kings who came after them are described as 'non-Israelitish', and their dynasty as that of the Zâguê. The province of Shoa in the south was the refuge of the descendants of the ancient line. It is not certain when this fall of the old dynasty took place, nor for how long the intruding dynasty held sway. By some native lists its duration is lengthened out to nearly four centuries, and some modern authors take the same view. The more probable duration of the dynasty was from 100 to 150 years. In any case the Zâguê-kings were dispossessed about the year 1270 when Yekuno Amlâk who came from Shoa and was a member of the Solomonic house was restored to the throne of his ancestors, assuming the proud title of *Negusa nagast*, King of kings, which has ever since been used by the kings of Abyssinia.[1] The restoration is said to have been due in great measure to the efforts of the great national saint Takla Hâymânot, and it is further recorded that these efforts on the Saint's part were rewarded by the king by a donation to the Church of one-third of the revenues of the kingdom—a kind of Abyssinian Donation of Constantine. The truth underlying the legend no doubt is that the king to show his gratitude was extremely liberal towards the clergy and the Church, but one-third of the

[1] A list of the most important reigns, with dates, is given in Appendix A.

kingdom is, as Littmann remarks, 'somewhat too much.'

During the next two centuries Abyssinia was greatly troubled both by attacks of enemies from outside, and also by internal dissensions, these latter arising chiefly from ecclesiastical matters. The Mahometan Arabs were the external foes. Yet Abyssinia fared better in their attacks than the countries round. This was no doubt due to the difficult nature of the country, the mountain fastnesses proving an obstacle against the invaders. Had the country been an open one like Egypt, it would have succumbed in all probability centuries before, as Egypt did. Two kings are prominent during these centuries, one in the first half of the fourteenth century, the second in the middle of the fifteenth. 'Amda Ṣeyon the first of these reigned from 1312 to 1342, and fought with vigour and success against the Mahometans, while at home he displayed similar energy against the internal unrest caused by the monks. The second, Zar'a Yâ'qob, perhaps the most famous of all the Abyssinian kings reigned from 1434 to 1468. His constant wars did not prevent him, though he came to the throne when already an old man, from efforts to reform the Church and improve the internal organization of the kingdom. Literature also flourished, as we shall see, during his reign, even the king himself entering into the lists as an author.

The first half of the sixteenth century was marked by events of great importance, wars with the Moslems (these were nothing new); the arrival of the Portuguese and the Jesuits; and the invasion of the Galla tribes from the south.

As early as the reign of Eskender (Alexander) whose dates are 1478–1495, an envoy of the king of Portugal had been in Abyssinia and had brought back to Europe some account of the Christian kings who reigned in Africa. In the beginning of the sixteenth century a queen, Helena by name, was ruling in Abyssinia as regent for her son Lebna Dengel. She saw with alarm the rising power of the Mahometans in the south-east, where there were two Moslem states—the Emirate of Harar and the kingdom of Adal, the capital of the latter being Zeila, now a port in British Somaliland. The queen bethought her of the Portuguese, and sent as envoy to Portugal an Armenian named Mathaeus who arrived in 1513. The king of Portugal sent de Lima to Abyssinia, who on his arrival found Lebna Dengel already on the throne. Matters do not seem to have moved with any great rapidity, for it was not until 1523 that de Lima returned to his own country accompanied by an Abyssinian envoy with powers to bring about an alliance between the two countries. Meanwhile the Abyssinians were in sore straits. They had been attacked by one of the most powerful foes that they had ever encountered, the Emir of Harar, Aḥmed ibn Ibrāhīm el Ghāzī, generally known as Grañ (i.e. the left-handed). Grañ drove Lebna Dengel further and further to the north, conquering, devastating, burning, as he went. Lebna Dengel offered a brave resistance, but the Moslems had fire-arms, and were aided by the Turks. On the death of Lebna Dengel, his son, Galâudêwos (Claudius), succeeded, who bravely continued the unequal struggle, appealing for aid not only to Portugal, but also to

the Pope, Paul III At last a Portuguese fleet arrived quite unexpectedly at Massowa on the Red Sea, from which a body of men under the command of Christopher da Gama (brother of the famous Vasco) were landed, and came to the help of the Christians. Christopher was captured by the Moslems and was put to death, but eventually with the help of the Portuguese the Christian cause proved victorious. Grañ was killed in battle in 1543.

A few years later the Jesuits arrived. At first little was accomplished by them, for though the king received them courteously he firmly refused to abandon the faith of his fathers. He engaged personally in controversy with the Jesuit missionaries, and composed a Confession of his Faith,[1] which he sent to Europe. The Jesuits went about their work with a strange want of tact, and only succeeded in stirring up civil strife in a country which required the united effort of all its people to resist their enemies outside. They did succeed in persuading one of the kings Susenyos to submit to the Church of Rome himself, but his efforts to procure by force the adhesion of his people to the same faith were all in vain. Finally, Fâsiladas (Basilides) the successor of Susenyos, drove out the Jesuits, or Franks, as they were called, altogether.

With the reign of Fâsiladas the political interest of the history of Abyssinia may be said to end, until comparatively recent times. Ethiopic Literature also decayed, as we shall see, and nothing new was written

[1] A translation of this Confession is given in Appendix B

but the annals of the successive kings. The Solomonic dynasty still continued, except for the reign of one usurper,[1] down to the middle of the nineteenth century, but though the king retained the high-sounding title of *Negusa nagast*, he enjoyed but a precarious power, and any real power there was, was in the hands of the under-kings. About the middle of the nineteenth century (1855) the old Solomonic dynasty fell. The king of Amhara, Kâsâ by name, succeeded in overcoming his rivals and proclaimed himself king of Abyssinia. He reigned as Theodore II till 1868, when he committed suicide on the capture of his fortress of Magdala by Lord Napier's expedition. His son was taken to England to be educated, but died at school. Yoḥannes or John, the under-king of Tigrê, who had given assistance to the English expedition was allowed to make himself king, and reigned as John IV until 1889 when he was killed in a battle against the forces of the Mahdi. His place was taken by Menelik of Shoa who succeeded in subduing the country and in freeing it from the anarchy into which it had fallen. In this he was assisted by the Italians who had by this time installed themselves in the colony of Eritrea on the shores of the Red Sea. The goodwill between Menelik II and his European patrons was not lasting. A war soon broke out between them which was ended in 1896 by a disaster to the Italian army at Adua.

Menelik reigned until 1914. The great World War had begun. The nearest heir to the throne was

[1] Yostos, i.e. Justus, 1709–1714.

Menelik's grandson Lidj Yeassu,[1] the son of Menelik's eldest daughter and an under-king named Mikail. By the influence of German and Turkish advisers the young prince was prevailed on to declare himself a Mahometan and to proclaim Islam as the national religion. Such an insult to their ancestral faith was not tolerated by the people. At once the *Abuna* Mâtêwos declared the king deposed for his apostasy and the crown was offered to one of the princesses, Zaodito, who had remained loyal to the Christian faith. In the war that ensued both Lidj Yeassu and his father Mikail were taken prisoners in the final battle. Abyssinia is still a Christian country.

[1] Note that the names are no longer Geez, but Amharic.

CHAPTER III

BRIEF SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS OF THE LITERATURE

In the brief space at my disposal I cannot hope to give an account of the character of the Ethiopic Church, or of its organization and beliefs, or of the manner of life of its people, or of the way in which these have varied throughout the centuries of the Church's existence. To do so would require another volume of size at least equal to the present. My task is merely to give some account of the literature of the Church so far as it is known, tracing also as well as as may be the rise and fall of the literary activity during the different stages of the history.

My subject is 'Ethiopic Christian Literature,' and that, for practical purposes, may be said to embrace all Ethiopic Literature.[1] In no other Church has Christianity so far permeated, outwardly at least, all literature. Nearly every Ethiopic manuscript, whether it be biblical, or liturgical, or theological, or historical, or philosophical, or even but a magic scroll, begins with 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God,' or some similar words

[1] There is a small amount of literature connected with the Falashas, or Jews of Abyssinia. Some of this has been published, e.g. the Te'ezâza Sanbat (ordinances of the Sabbath) edited by Halévy (Paris 1902).

This is no doubt to be accounted for by the fact that these manuscripts come to us ultimately from the priests and monks of the Church, in whose hands was all the learning of the country, and who alone were able to read and write.

Much of the literature of the Ethiopic Church, much even of its Bible, is as yet unpublished, and exists only in manuscripts either in Abyssinia, or in the great libraries in London, Oxford, Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin and elsewhere. Fresh works are being edited in Ethiopic, or at least translated every year, but even if all that is extant had already appeared the literature would be but scanty when compared with the literatures of some of the other Oriental Churches, such as the Syrian. This is only natural; the only wonder is that we have so much. The Church was always remote, far away from the different great intellectual movements which made themselves felt elsewhere, and this isolation was naturally intensified after the rise of Islam. The Ethiopic Church and nation was like a Christian oasis in the surrounding desert of Mahometanism. Their only connexion for centuries with the Christian world outside was the ecclesiastical connexion with the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria.

This literature, as it is known to us, is characterized by a conspicuous defect, its want of originality. It is, in the first place, for the most part a literature of translations. With the exception of the *Chronicles* of the Abyssinian kings, which are all framed on a stereotyped model, there are very few works which have the stamp of originality. Two philosophers, who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century

(see p. 93ff.) showed themselves to be in a large measure original thinkers, but they, though leavened with a truer Christian spirit, were regarded as unorthodox by their contemporaries. Of course all the works which are extant are not translations, but in many cases, when they are not so, they still show a want of originality by being merely native copies of outside models. The *Synaxar* or Breviary of the Coptic Church was translated into Ethiopic about the middle of the fifteenth century, but it was afterwards enlarged by additions of notices of native saints, written on the same pattern. The longer Lives or Acts also of the Abyssinian martyrs and saints were conformed to those already known ; even Apocalypses were written on the model of the *Book of Enoch* and similar works.

One other remark of a general nature must be made. I give it in the words of Littmann.[1] 'The history of Ethiopic literature is far more a history of books and institutions than of men and ideas. The personal element falls largely into the background ; only in a few instances do we know the name of an author or of a translator, and we seldom have any particulars about their lives. Scarcely one single vigorous personality has given an effective literary expression to his life and ideas.'

In tracing the rise and progress and decay of Ethiopic literature we may recognize roughly four periods. First the period of growth, beginning with, or soon after, the introduction of Christianity. This lasted for about three centuries and was followed by

[1] pp. 203 f.

a period of darkness about which we know nothing so far as literary activity is concerned, and very little else. Then came a revival of literature at the time of Yekuno Amlâk at the end of the thirteenth century. This period of renascence lasted for about a century and a half and brings us up to the Golden Age of the literature, the times of Zar'a Yâ'qob and his successors (1430–1520). The last period is the time of gradual decay in all literary activity and interests, caused by the wars outside, and still more by the religious and other dissensions within the kingdom.

First Period

The rise of the literature was no doubt due to the introduction of Christianity. Dillmann [1] writes emphatically of the Ethiopic Bible that it was 'the foundation of all Abyssinian literature and the standard to which all other writers conformed their style of writing.' The introduction of monasticism which came later had probably here as elsewhere an important effect on literary work. In addition to the Books of the Bible, including of course amongst these the apocryphal and other similar books, we have not much remaining from this period. We must remember however that the Ethiopic Bible includes books not reckoned as canonical in other churches, such as the *Book of Enoch* and the *Book of Jubilees*. These reached Abyssinia in this early period and were translated into Geez from Greek. This shown by the fact that

[1] *Lexicon*, Proleg. p. v.

not alone proper names but also common nouns are transliterated in accordance with their Greek forms.[1] To this same period belongs also the collection of writings known as *Qerlos* (i.e. Cyril) so called because the first documents of the collection are connected with St. Cyril of Alexandria. The whole work is described by Dillmann[2] as a 'splendid monument of the older language.' Here too is to be put the translation of the *Rules of Pachomius*, the Ethiopic text of which has been published by Dillmann in his *Chrestomathia Aethiopica*, and of which Schodde has given an English translation in the *Presbyterian Review* (1885). The work consists of three parts, of which the first and oldest exists in Greek also in the *Lausiac History* of Palladius.[3] The *Physiologus*, a work on Natural History, shows by the fact that it has been translated from the Greek that it too belongs to this first period. The Ethiopic version with a German translation has been edited by F. Hommel (1877).

It seems extremely probable that some at least of the Liturgies were translated during this period. It is hardly likely that the Church could have existed so long without fixed liturgical services. No doubt they were afterwards revised and perhaps interpolated; their number too may have been increased. We

[1] See Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, Introd., p. xxx.
[2] *Lexicon*, Proleg. p. vii.
[3] The chapters of the *Lausiac History* named by Dillmann are xxxix and xl, but in the English translation (S.P.C.K. W. K. Lowther Clarke) they are those numbered xxxii and xxxiii (first section). The second part of the Ethiopic work is also extant in a Greek manuscript at Florence and in a Latin version in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

have, it is true, no liturgical manuscript from this period, but neither have we any manuscript of the Bible or any other work. What is accounted the earliest of all extant Ethiopic manuscripts is an Octateuch now at Paris which is generally believed to date from the end of the thirteenth century.[1]

Second Period

When the veil is lifted once more after the centuries of darkness, we find in some respects quite a different state of things. The connexion with Alexandria is still indeed maintained, but in Egypt itself a change has meanwhile taken place. Mahometan rule has brought in the use of Arabic. Greek is no longer used, and even Coptic has fallen into the background. From this on, all, or nearly all, the Ethiopic translations are made from Arabic. At any rate none are made any longer from Greek, as they were in the first period. It is just possible that some translations were made from Coptic. Littmann instances the Church Hymn-book *Weddâsê Mâryâm* (Praises of Mary) as being closer to the Coptic version than to the Arabic. The Ethiopic *Didascalia* also shows clearly in one place that the Coptic version of the same stands somewhere in its line of descent from the Greek original, and it is different as regards its contents from the Arabic *Didascalia* found in most manuscripts. Recently another Arabic recension has been discovered which agrees almost entirely with the Ethiopic version. Possibly therefore the Ethiopic

[1] The latest editor of the Octateuch does not put the date of this manuscript so early, see below, p. 45.

Praises of Mary may be a translation of another Arabic version now lost, which was itself derived from the Coptic. There is nothing however antecedently improbable in the supposition that some of the Abyssinians were familiar with Coptic. It will remain true, in any case, however it may have been with a few works, that nearly all the literature of Abyssinia from the commencement of this second period is based on the Arabic literature of the Coptic Church. The name chiefly connected with the renascence of literature during this period is that of Abbâ Salâmâ who ruled the Church during the first half of the fourteenth century. A revision of the Bible was made under his direction, and other works were written or translated at his instigation. The Liturgies also come from this period in so far as they are not from the first. Other ecclesiastical works from this period in addition to the *Weddâsê Mâryâm* already mentioned, and various Lives of Saints and Martyrs, are the *Book of Hours* (*Maṣḥafa*[1] *Sâ'atât*), a Burial Service (*M. Genzat*), and the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* (*Gadla Ḥawaryât*).[2] Somewhat later, but still in the same period, come the *Interpretation of Jesus* (*Fekkârê Iyasus*) a kind of apocalyptic work prophesying the advent of a king Theodore who was

[1] This word occurs so often in the titles of books that after this I use merely the abbreviation M.

[2] These have been edited by E. A. Wallis Budge, with an English translation (1899 and 1901) under the title the *Contendings of the Apostles*. It consists of thirty shorter narratives dealing with the preaching and deaths of the apostles and their followers, succeeded by longer Acts of SS. Thomas Peter and Paul.

to bring peace and blessing to his country; and the *Book of Mystery* (*M. Meṣṭir*) which is in the main a controversial work against various heresies, but is also professedly historical containing legends as to the rise of Christianity in Abyssinia.

Of other works claiming to be historical which come from this same period, two may here be mentioned, one of native origin, and the other a translation of a foreign work. The native work is the famous *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*). It is in reality not history but romance, tracing back the origin of kings to the beginning of the world and the lineage of the Abyssinian dynasty to the time of Solomon. A fuller account of this work is given in a later chapter (p. 87 ff). The foreign work is a translation of the *Chronicle* of Joseph ben Gorion the Jew, under the Ethiopic title of *Zênâ Ayhud*, that is, *The History of the Jews*. It contains the history of the Jewish nation from the time of Cyrus and the return from Babylon up to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus.

It would seem very likely that we should put also in this period three works which Littmann assigns to the next. All three are quoted as authorities by King Zar'a Yâ'qob who comes himself at the beginning of the third period, and it is scarcely probable that they would have been so referred to by him as authoritative had they not been in existence for a considerable time. The first of these is the collection of ecclesiastical constitutions and canons in eight books known as the *Sĭnodos* and reckoned by the Ethiopic Church as part of the New Testament. The other two are the *Didascalia* and the *Testament of our Lord*. Of these,

the former according to the tradition of the Church comes from the earliest period, but this is improbable, as it is a translation not from Greek, but from Arabic, or perhaps, as mentioned above, from Coptic. The latter, the *Testament of our Lord* is quoted, according to Dillmann [1] not only by Zar'a Yâ'qob but also in the *M. Meṣṭir*, itself a work of the second period, as we have already seen. Of all these three works more will be said hereafter (chapter vi).

Third Period

This period, though it is shorter than any of the others, is the Golden Age of Ethiopic Literature. Three at least of the kings who reigned during these years interested themselves in literary matters, and two of them, Zar'a Yâ'qob and Nâ'od, figure as authors. The same types of literature are continued, but we find features that are new, or at least further developed. One of these arises from the circumstances of the time. One of Zar'a Yâ'qob's chief efforts at reform was directed against the magic and superstition which were everywhere rife. He himself is credited with having written the *Book of Light* (*M. Berhân*), so called from Christ the Light of the world. Its polemic against heathenish practices shows the kind of magic ceremonies and immoralities which were current at the time. One interesting, though unexpected, result of these literary efforts in opposition to magic was that they gave rise to a literature on the opposite side as well. Superstition and magic were not then, and never have been, banished from the country and the Church.

[1] *Lexicon*, Proleg. p. viii.

In this period, again, we meet for the the first time the writing of regular Chronicles or Annals. Earlier ones may have been written, but if so, they are now lost. The wars of King 'Amda Ṣeyon at least were recounted, but this was in verse, and not in the form of Chronicles. Church hymns of various sorts also come from this period. Earlier we have met with only the so-called *Praises of Mary*, hymns in honour of the Blessed Virgin arranged for the days of the week. It must remain uncertain how far back in the history of the Abyssinian Church these Church hymns go. According to the tradition of the Church the founder of Church-song was Yârêd, a contemporary of the 'Nine Saints,' but this is probably mere guess-work. The details at least are legendary, for the story runs that he was caught up into Paradise, and brought down thence the invention of plain-song and the division of the Hymns according to the seasons of the year. From the present period we have in connexion with the name of Zar'a Yâ'qob himself a collection of hymns for the Saints' Days of the year known as *Egzi'abher Nagsa* (the Lord reigneth) and also another collection, arranged like the *Weddâsê Mâryâm* for the days of the week, and known as the *Organ of the Virgin*, or the *Organ of Praises* (Arganona Dengel, Arganona Weddâsê). Another king who took an interest in Church Song was Nâ'od to whose authorship is assigned a *Malke'a Mâryâm* (*Likeness of Mary*), and a collection of *Sellâsê* (six-lined stanzas). Each of these represents a separate type. The so-called '*Likenesses*' are hymns in honour of saints in which the various parts of the Saint's body are recounted

one by one, each in a separate stanza.[1] The *Sellâse* are a kind of poem intended to be sung in Church after certain verses of the Psalter.

Other books of Church-song, which may come from the same period, are the *Degguâ*, the *Antiphonary* (*Mawâse'et*, i.e. answers), and the *Me'râf*, which are collections of hymns or anthems for the various festivals throughout the year.

The third of the kings whose name is connected with literature during this period is Lebna Dengel. He does not appear as an author, but it was at his suggestion that Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* was translated, as well as a commentary on the gospels ascribed to Dionysios.

Meanwhile two types of literature which were found in the preceding period were continued, Lives of Saints (often in the form of Homilies) and apocryphal Gospels or Acts. Of the former type we have from this period the Lives of Takla Haymanot, the great national saint of the time of Yekuno Amlâk, of Yârêd the reputed father of Church-song, and of Na'akueto la Ab, the last of the Zâguê-kings ; and of the former several connected with the our Lord's birth, the *Book of the Birth* (*M. Milâd*), the *Wonders of Mary*, and the *Wonders of Mary and Jesus*.

Allied with these, but of a somewhat more scientific kind, are two other works. The first is the *Senkesar* or *Seneksar* (the Ethiopic form of *Synaxar*). This the Calendar or Breviary of the Church. It was translated from the Arabic *Synaxar* of the Coptic Church in the

[1] An example of these is given later on (p. 58 f).

middle of the fifteenth century, but was afterwards enlarged by adding many notices of native saints and martyrs, as well as by a feature peculiarly Abyssinian, the addition of a short rhymed poem, known as a *salâm*, at the end of each commemoration (see below, p. 67). The second is a collection of anecdotes and sayings of the Fathers, which is known by two names, *Gannat* (i.e. Garden or Paradise) and *Stories of the Honoured Fathers* (*Zênâhomu la-Abau keburân*). Of historical works during this period in addition to the *Chronicles* already mentioned we have a translation of the *Universal History* of George the Egyptian who is known in Abyssinia is Giyorgis walda Amid.

Fourth Period

Political strife without and religious dissensions within marked the greater part of this period of the decadence of Ethiopic Literature. The struggles were on the whole prejudicial to literary activity and to the preservation of its products. The wars with the Moslem Arabs and the savage Galla tribes, so long as they lasted, naturally put an end to all opportunity or wish for writing. Not only so, but much also that had been previously written must then have perished when churches and monasteries were sacked and burnt. The effect of the internal dissensions on the literature was not quite the same, but they tended to confine the desire for writing to controversial works. Of these may be mentioned from the time of Galâudêwos (Claudius) his own Confession of Faith already alluded to (p. 16) and a treatise on the monophysite theology called the *Refuge of the Soul* (*Ṣawana*

Nafs). These were original works. From about the same time we have, translated from Arabic, the *Fekkârê Malakot* (*Exposition of the Godhead*), and the *Hâymânota Abau* (*Faith of the Fathers*), the latter being a collection of documents relating to monophysitism.

Near the close of the sixteenth century arose an important worker in the person of 'Enbâqom (Habakkuk). He was a convert from Islam to Christianity. Originally a merchant of Yemen in South Arabia he ended by being the head of the great monastery of Dabra Libânos. Two works connected with him either as author or instigator are, the *Superiority of the Christian Faith* and the *Gate of Faith* (*Anqaṣa Amin*). The purpose of both of these was to win back the Christians who had gone over to Islam during the troublous times of the wars with Grañ (p. 15). In the same monastery and at about the same time another monk, Salik by name, translated a great theological work known as the *M. Hawi*. This title seems to be a translation of the Greek *Pandectes*, for the work is a version in Ethiopic of the religious encyclopædia of Nicon whose title in the original is Πανδέκτης τῶν ἑρμηνειῶν τῶν θείων ἐντολῶν τοῦ Κυρίου. This book is a collection of precepts on various subjects taken from the Church Fathers, treating of the necessity of knowledge of Holy Scripture, the commandments of God, the monastic life, confession, fasting, etc. Another work emanating from the same monastery at about the same time is a refutation of various heresies known as the *Talmid* (*Pupil*). The somewhat strange title is due to the fact that the author of the original work was George, a pupil of Anthony, the Syrian.

During the next century very few definitely theological works were produced. One however must be mentioned which was translated from Arabic in 1667 at the suggestion of the queen Sabla Wangel, mother of King Iyasu. It is a penitential work entitled *Faus Manfasâwi* (*Spiritual Medicine*) and contains in its thirty-five chapters precepts and recommendations with regard to special sins, ending with a series of instructions on the Holy Communion, Baptism, Chrism, the Church, and clerical discipline. There is also another work bearing the same title whose author and date are unknown.

The same Habakkuk who has been mentioned above interested himself also in history and kindred subjects, being the translator of two works, one, the *Universal History* of Abū Shākir and the second the *Story of Baralâm and Yewâsef* (Barlaam and Josaphat), a popular religious romance. Similar to the last-named work is another from the same period the *Romance of Alexander*. This is a translation of the Arabic version of the romance attributed in the Middle Ages to Callisthenes, the Greek historian (grandnephew of Aristotle) who wrote a History, now lost, of Alexander's conquests.[1]

[1] A translation of this work forms the main part of the volume entitled the *Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great* published by E. A. Wallis Budge in 1896. In the same volume are also included (1) those parts of the *Histories* of Walda Amid, Abū Shākir, and Joseph ben Gorion which deal with Alexander's life; (2) an anonymous history of Alexander's death; (3) a Christian Romance on Alexander, and (4) the History of blessed men who lived in the time of Jeremiah the Prophet. As these are all translations from Ethiopic, they deserve a notice here

The wars of the sixteenth century caused a revival of writing of *Chronicles*. One of the most important of these is the *Short* or *Abridged Chronicle*, which is extant in more than one recension. It starts with lists of the ancient kings and contains brief accounts of the reigns of the kings from Yekuno Amlâk to Lebna Dengel.[1] A fuller story begins at the time of the wars with Grañ. The *Chronicle* comes down to the reign of Bakâffâ (1730). There are longer *Chronicles* also for the reigns of many of the kings from Zar'a Yâ'qob onwards. An important historical translation made in this period is that of the *Chronicle* of John, Bishop of Nikiou, the Arabic original of which is no longer extant. It owes its importance to the fact that that it is a contemporary account, written from the Christian point of view, of the conquest of Egypt by the Arabs. This translation which also was due to royal suggestion, was made by an Egyptian named Gabriel in the reign of Yâ'qob (1595–1605).[2] About the same time a monk named Baḥrey wrote a brief account of the wars with the Galla tribes. In this in addition to describing the campaigns he gives a description of the Gallas, contrasting them favourably in some respects, especially as to courage, with the men of his own nation (see below, p. 85 ff.).

During the period of decadence it would seem that there was at least one or perhaps two attempts at a revision of the Ethiopic Bible. This is a matter of

[1] Littmann, p. 218.
[2] This *Chronicle* was edited by Zotenberg. There is an English translation of his text, published by Charles in 1916.

inference from the character of the text found in the manuscripts now extant. There is not any direct historical evidence on the question. Littmann supposes that one revision came at the resumption of literary work after the wars of the sixteenth century and that another was connected with the religious struggle in the century following. It is extremely probable that the seventeenth century at least saw some such revision, for the mission of the Jesuits must have emphasized the difference between the text current in Abyssinia and the translations which they made from the Vulgate.

It is during this last period that we meet for the first time in Ethiopic Literature writings connected with two fresh branches of learning, law and philosophy. Zar'a Yâ'qob's *Book of Light* has, it is true, been already mentioned, which is concerned with Church ordinances, and a large part of the *Sinodos* is made up of Statutes and Canons traditionally connected with the apostles. There was also a book entitled *Ser'ata Mangest*, which is mainly a book of court etiquette, but as yet there was no civil or criminal law-book in existence. An attempt to meet the need for such a book was made by a translation of the Nomocanon of Abū Isḥāq Ibn al 'Assal, an Egyptian who wrote in the thirteenth century. This Arabic work is a collection of old Roman laws, biblical precepts and ecclesiastical ordinances. The Ethiopic version received the name of *Fetḥa Nagast* (*The Law of the Kings*). It is still the official law-book of Abyssinia in ecclesiastical, civil and criminal procedure (see below, chapter viii).

Of philosophy, we have two works which are amongst the most original to be found in the whole course of the literature. Both of these bear the modest title of *Enquiry*. They come from the seventeenth century and are the work of a philosopher named Zar'a Yâ'qob and his pupil Walda Ḥeywat. Though these two *Enquiries* combat many of the positions of the fellow-countrymen of the authors, they are both conceived, as has been already hinted, in a spirit far more truly Christian than are the works accounted orthodox. It is refreshing to find some originality in the midst of the dreary monotony of hagiology and stereotyped chronicles that are met with for the most part elsewhere in the literature. Considering the place where and the time when these *Enquiries* were written, Littmann hardly goes too far when he says (p. 220) that they are a ' real contribution to the history of human thought.'

The end of the seventeenth century saw the close of Ethiopic Literature for all practical purposes. The state chroniclers indeed continued to write the annals of the successive kings, but the language in which these were written degenerated more and more. This was only natural. Geez had died out long before as the language of daily life. The language of the Court and of the majority of the people was, and had long been, Amharic. Naturally therefore the chroniclers here and there in their chronicles employed the Amharic words which were more familiar to them. A hybrid form of writing arose which is known as the *lesâna târik* the tongue, or dialect, of history. These Amharic words coming in the midst of true Ethiopi-

words often have a strange appearance, for the Amharic alphabet requires several additional letters to express the sounds of the language. Finally even the Chronicles came to be written in pure Amharic. Other works also during this final period, which were intended for popular use, were written in the same language. In doing this the Jesuits were the pioneers, but the 'orthodox' had to follow suit. Into the rise and progress of this Amharic literature, which is thought by some to have a future before it, we cannot enter here.

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE OF THE ETHIOPIC CHURCH

THE canon of the Ethiopic Bible differs both in the Old and in the New Testament from that of any other Church. In the New Testament the difference is a simple one. The number of the books is reckoned as thirty-five. This number is obtained by adding to the twenty-seven books of our New Testament the eight books of a collection of constitutions and canons of the Church known as the *Sinodos*. A fuller account of this work will be given later on (p. 61 f.). As to the Old Testament canon there is more uncertainty. The number of the books is given uniformly as forty-six, but 'hardly two lists of these books agree.'[1] Let us take as an example of such lists one that is found in a British Museum manuscript (Add. 16188). It runs as follows: *Octateuch*, 8; *Kufâlê* (Jubilees), 1; *Kings* and *Chronicles*, 5; *Job*, 1; *Solomon*, 5; *Greater Prophets*, 4; *Minor Prophets*, 12; *Ezra*, 2; *Maccabees*, 1; *Tobit*, 1; *Judith*, 1; *Assenath*, 1; *Esther*, 1; *Sirach*, 1; *Psalter*, 1; *Uzziah*, 1. The total number here, it will be seen, is forty-six, but this list lacks all mention of the *Book of Enoch*, *Baruch*,[2] *Third* (or *Fourth*)

[1] See Charles, *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, i, p. 791.
[2] This is no doubt included in Jeremiah, see below, p. 46

Esdras.[1] These as well as others are included in other lists.

Of the books named in the list given a few perhaps need a word of explanation. The *Octateuch* (known to the Ethiopic Church as the *Orit*, that is, the Law) contains the Books from *Genesis* to *Ruth*. '*Kings*' includes of course, as in the LXX, the *Books of Samuel*.[2] Five books are assigned in the list to Solomon. This means that *Proverbs* is counted as two, the two parts being (*a*) the Proverbs, (*b*) the Institutions of Solomon (as in Brit. Mus. Add. 16186), and that the other three are *Ecclesiastes*, *Canticles* and *Wisdom*. The *Book of Maccabees* named in the list is not the same as any of those generally so entitled. The apocryphal *Books of Maccabees* were either not translated into Ethiopic at all, or, if they were, the version was lost in early times. To supply their place a romance was composed. This contains the account of the martyrdom of three Jews in the reign of a king who bears the extraordinary name of Ṣiruṣâydân, i.e. Tyre and Sidon, followed by discussions on the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, as well as by some account of the general biblical history of the Jews. The name Assenath probably refers to the apocryphal book with regard to the story of Joseph, which is known in various versions, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Sclavonic, and entitled generally the *Book of Joseph and*

[1] Unless, as is not likely, the *Books of Ezra* and *Nehemiah* are counted as one, and the two apocryphal as another, see below, p. 44 (*n*).

[2] *Chronicles* is obviously counted as one book.

Asenath.[1] It was, in its original form, of Jewish origin, but, as we know it now, has been modified by Christian editors. It is quite unknown what book the writer of the list above has in mind in speaking of the *Book of Uzziah*, which he names last.

Other books, in addition to those already mentioned, which seem to have had at least a semi-canonical authority, were, in the Old Testament, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, and in the New, the *Shepherd of Hermas*.

The books of the Old and New Testaments were translated in the early days of Abyssinian Christianity, but probably not all at the same time. A beginning would doubtless be made with the gospels, and the book that was translated last is said [2] to have been the *Wisdom of Sirach* (A.D. 678). It is generally agreed that the translations were made originally from the Greek, not only in the New, but also in the Old Testament. According to a tradition preserved in the poetry of the country the version was made from Arabic by Abbâ Salâmâ (Frumentius), but this seems to be a mistake due to a confusion of the two men who bore this name, and also to the fact that the *Sinodos*, which is part of the Ethiopic New Testament, was translated from Arabic. Renaudot held that the version was derived from the Coptic, and Lagarde maintained the extraordinary opinion, which Charles rightly describes as 'preposterous,' that the Ethiopic version was translated from Arabic or Coptic in the

[1] An English translation, by E. W. Brooks, has been published by the S.P.C.K. (*Translations of Early Documents*, Series ii, 1918).

[2] See Littmann, p. 203.

fourteenth century. That it was translated from Greek seems proved by internal evidence. In the Old Testament Greek names of animals, plants, precious stones, etc., are at times retained. Hebrew words which are transliterated in the LXX are similarly dealt with in the Ethiopic version, and when the order of the chapters in the LXX differs from that of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. in Exodus), the Ethiopic agrees with the former.

The tradition as to Abbâ Salâmâ has been already mentioned. Others attribute the version to the 'Nine Saints'. It is almost certain that the whole translation is not the work of one man. Not only is the same word translated differently in the different books, but even the style of translation varies from book to book. Some are translated literally, in others paraphrase is employed; some are correctly rendered, others badly.[1]

It is a matter of dispute what particular type of LXX text formed the basis of the Ethiopic Old Testament. Cornill has argued for the Hesychian, others for the Lucianic on the ground that this was the type of text most used in Syria whence the missionaries came. The question can hardly be decided till such time as a critical text of the Ethiopic Old Testament is made. It is more important to notice that though the Ethiopic version is undoubtedly based on the LXX, it differs from it in some places and agrees with the Hebrew text. Dillmann in his Introduction to the

[1] Littmann, p. 224.

Ethiopic version of the *Books of Kings* says (pp. 3–5) that the extant manuscripts exhibit three types of text. There is first an ancient type, represented by two manuscripts, in which the ordinary division into chapters is not found; second come the manuscripts of the type generally current, which give a text that is the result of a revision from Greek manuscripts; and thirdly there is a type of text, represented by but one manuscript in the *Books of Kings*, which presupposes a revision of the first type of text in accordance with the Hebrew. This last-mentioned manuscript further agrees with those of the first type in not having the usual chapter-division.

It is, however, possible that this agreement with the Hebrew in these manuscripts is to be accounted for otherwise than by a revision founded on the Masoretic text itself. Archdeacon Charles, for example, favours the idea that Origen's Hexapla was used by the Ethiopic revisers, supporting his opinion by examples taken from the *Book of Lamentations*.[1] The Italian scholar, Guidi, on the other hand, conjectures[2] that the reviser may have got help from the Arabic version of the Jew Saadia Gaon. However this may be, it is certain that the original Ethiopic version of the Old Testament was more than once revised, the first revision coming at the revival of literature at the end of the thirteenth century, and the other, or others, between 1500 and 1700.

The case is somewhat similar with regard to the

[1] Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, i, p. 792. He mentions also *The Book of Malachi*, but gives no examples from it.
[2] Cf. Littmann, p. 226.

New Testament. Two types of text are found. The first was evidently made from a Greek original, one probably which had the type of text in use in the neighbourhood of Antioch before the rise of the so-called Antiochian or Syrian Greek text. With this later text the second type of Ethiopic text has been brought into agreement. The Ethiopic New Testament, as at present printed, agrees sometimes with the oldest Greek uncials, sometimes with the 'Western' text, and again in other places differs from these in agreement with the great body of later Greek manuscripts. In the New Testament also, as in the Old, there is a crying need for the formation of a critical Ethiopic text.

As examples of the type of mistake by the translators of the Ethiopic version in all the books of the Old Testament, the following examples which I have noted in the *Psalter* may not be without interest:—

In xv. 6 κρατίστοις and κρατίστη are each taken as if from κρατῶ; in both xliv. 9 and xlvii. 4 βάρις is confused with βαρύς; in lxii. 2 ἄβατος is translated 'without wood (or tree)', i.e. ἀ and βάτος; in lxiv. 8 κύτος is read as κῆτος; in lxvii. 23 the words ἐκ Βασάν are taken as if they were together a part of ἐκβαίνω; in lxxvi. 3 ἠπατήθην is translated as if it were from πατῶ; in cxli. 6 ἠδύνθησαν is confused with ἠδυνήθησαν. In this last case it is possible that the translators found ἠδυνήθησαν in their text, as it is the reading of R (the Verona bi-lingual Psalter) with whose text the Ethiopic Psalter is elsewhere in somewhat remarkable agreement. Both, for example, have in xxxvii. 20 the addition 'and they cast forth their brother as an

unclean corpse' and in cxxxv. 16 the addition 'who brought forth water from the rock, for his mercy endureth for ever.'

The first part of the Bible to be printed in Ethiopic was the *Psalter* together with such biblical Hymns as the Songs of Moses, of Hannah, of Hezekiah, etc., which are generally found at the end of Ethiopic manuscripts of the *Psalter*. This was edited in 1513 by Potken. A few years later (1548) the greater part of the New Testament appeared. This volume lacked the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul, but these were published in the following year. The editor Tasfa Ṣeyon (Petrus Ethyops, as he is described in the title) had unfortunately poor materials to work on. In the *Acts of the Apostles* his manuscript was defective and he was obliged to fill up the gaps by translations of his own from the Greek and Latin. The result was not a success. He also asks pardon for the mistakes due to his 'unskilled assistants.' 'Fathers and brothers,' he pleads, 'judge not harshly the faults of this edition, for those who printed were unable to read, and I was unable to print. So they helped me, and I them, as the blind help the blind. Pardon therefore them and me.' The text of this edition with all its manifold errors was reprinted in the following century in Walton's *Polyglot*. A revised edition of the Ethiopic Gospels was produced under the editorship of Platt by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1828, and the whole New Testament in 1830. Platt's edition was revised by the German scholar, Praetorius, in 1899. None of these editions are of critical value.

Much of the Old Testament still remains unprinted, and what has already seen the light has been produced piecemeal. Of the canonical books the following have never yet been published: *Chronicles*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Hosea*, *Micah*, *Amos*, *Habakkuk*, and *Nahum*. All the other books have been published, but in very different forms and at widely different dates. The *Psalter*, as has been already mentioned, was the first book printed in Ethiopic. *Canticles* was given along with the *Psalter* in Walton's *Polyglot*. In the seventeenth century some of the shorter books were published separately, namely, *Zephaniah* and *Ruth* by Nisselius, and *Malachi* and *Joel* by Petraeus. It was not until two centuries later that the *Octateuch* was first published, by Dillmann in 1853–1855. The *Books of Samuel* and *Kings* were afterwards edited by the same scholar in 1861 and 1871 respectively. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the publication of four more books, *Obadiah*, *Lamentations*, *Isaiah* and *Zechariah*. The first three were edited by Bachmann in 1892–1893, and the fourth by Kramer in 1898. Four new books have been added to the list during the present century, all published in the *Patrologia Orientalis*, namely, *Job*, *Esther*, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*.[1] Mention should also be made of the edition of the Ethiopic

[1] These last two Ezra-Nehemiah are published *Patr. Or.* 13 v., under a title calculated to mislead, namely, the *Third Book of Ezra*. As the editor, Pereira, points out in his Introduction the writings known as Ezra are in the Ethiopic version classed in three books, *1 Ezra* = *the Apocalypse of Ezra* (our *4 Esdras*), *2 Ezra* = our *3 Esdras*, *3 Ezra* = the two Canonical books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*.

Octateuch which has been commenced in the *Bibliotheca Abessinica* (E. J. Brill, Leyden). Two volumes have already appeared, the first containing *Genesis* in 1909, the second (1911) containing *Exodus* and *Leviticus*. In this edition which is based on six manuscripts the method adopted is to print the text of the oldest manuscript, corrected only where obviously in error, and to give the variants of the other five at the foot of the page. The editor, Dr. J. O. Boyd, believes that this oldest manuscript does not, as is commonly supposed, belong to the thirteenth century, but to the fifteenth, or to the fourteenth at the earliest.

The Apocryphal books in their Ethiopic form have fared somewhat better than the canonical with respect to publication. Of those which are found in the Apocrypha of our Bibles by far the greater number were published by Dillmann in 1894. This edition includes *Baruch* (with the *Epistle of Jeremiah*), *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Wisdom*, the *Apocalypse of Ezra*, (*4 Esdras*),[1] and *3 Esdras*. The extra parts of *Esther* are to be found in the edition of the *Book of Esther* above mentioned. As *Daniel* has not yet been published, the Apocryphal additions thereto are in similar case with the exception of the Song of the Three Children.[2] There remain only the *Prayer of Manasses* and the *Books of Maccabees*. Of these the former is contained entire in the Ethiopic *Didascalia* as in the Greek *Apostolic Constitutions*. Its text is

[1] *The Apocalypse of Ezra* had previously been edited by Laurence in 1820.

[2] This is included amongst the biblical hymns above mentioned.

therefore available in Platt's edition of the former (chapter v). The *Books of Maccabees* have already been mentioned. The early Ethiopic book which bears the name has no connexion with the history of the Maccabees. A version of the first and second books is extant, but it is a late (seventeenth century) translation from the Vulgate.

The *Book of Baruch* above mentioned is the same as that which is found in our Apocrypha. Another book also connected with the name of Baruch is found in the manuscripts of the Ethiopic Bible after Jeremiah. To the book of this prophet are appended (1) the *Book of Baruch* as in our Apocrypha, (2) *Lamentations*, (3) the *Epistle of Jeremiah*, (4) a short prophecy added with the intention of freeing the reference to Jeremiah in Matt. xxvii. 9 from suspicion of error,[1] (5) the *Rest of the Words of Baruch*.

The text of this last-named book has been published in Dillmann's *Chrestomathy*. It is a translation of a Greek original of the second century, which seems to depend in part on a Jewish work. The book is connected with the better-known Syriac *Apocalypse of Baruch*, but it is not identical with it.[2]

Under the heading of the present chapter mention must also be made of certain books belonging to

[1] This runs as follows: 'They will sell him who is above price, and will grieve him who will cure grief, and will condemn him who will forgive sin, and will receive thirty (pieces of) silver, the price of him who was valued whom the children of Israel will sell, and will cast the money into the field of the potter.'

[2] Cf. Charles, *Apocalypse of Baruch*, p. xviii. The best edition of the Greek text is that of J. R. Harris (1889).

that class usually designated pseudepigraphic. These are well known by name, but it ought not to be forgotten, as it so often is, that the whole of Christendom, indeed, one might almost say the whole learned world, owes a debt of gratitude to the remote and often neglected Church of Abyssinia for the preservation of these documents. Apart from mere fragments elsewhere preserved, it is that Church alone which has handed them down to us.

Foremost amongst these is the *Book of Enoch* which throws so much light on Jewish thought on various points during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era. Archdeacon Charles in his edition of the book speaks[1] of it and similar works as 'being practically the only historical memorials of the religious development of Judaism during the two centuries which preceded the birth of Christianity, and particularly of that side of Judaism to which historically Christendom in large measure owes its existence.' It is matter of discussion in what language the book was originally written. The language was certainly Semitic, but whether Hebrew (Halevy) or Aramaic (Schurer and others) is undecided. Charles unites both views, affirming that the original of chapters vi–xxxiv was Aramaic and that of the rest Hebrew. He claims to have discovered also that much of the original text was in verse. Whatever the original may have been, the greater part of the book is now extant only in the Ethiopic version which was translated not from the original but from the Greek.

[1] Introduction, p. ix.

So much has been written in recent years about the *Book of Enoch*, that it seems unnecessary to speak here of its subject-matter and its various divisions. The *editio princeps* was the work of the English scholar Laurence who edited it at Oxford in 1838 from a single manuscript which the famous traveller Bruce had brought from Abyssinia in the previous century. The Book was again edited by Dillmann from five manuscripts in 1851, by Flemming in 1902, and finally by Charles in 1906 in a monumental work based on twenty-five manuscripts. There is a convenient English translation, published by the S.P.C.K.[1] a reprint of Charles' translation of 1912.

The *Book of Jubilees* (in Ethiopic *Kufâlê*, i.e. Divisions) otherwise known as the *Little Genesis*, has also been preserved entire only in the Ethiopic version. One-fourth of the whole book is extant also in a Latin version and numerous fragments of the Greek version have been handed down in the works of various authors. Here again there is uncertainty as to the original language of the book. For several reasons Charles[2] decides in favour of Hebrew. Of this original the Greek version is a daughter, and from the Greek the Ethiopic is derived. The book is the work of a single author but 'based on earlier books and traditions.' It consists, speaking generally, of a reproduction of the subject-matter of the *Book of Genesis* (whence the name '*Little Genesis*') in the form of a midrash, and its author belonged to the sect of

[1] *Translations of Early Documents*, Series I, No. 3
[2] Introduction, pp. xxxii–xxxiii.

the Pharisees. The name 'Jubilees' is given to the book because its author divides the history from the creation into jubilee-periods of forty-nine years each.

The Ethiopic text was first edited by Dillmann from two late manuscripts in 1859. A later edition, based on these manuscripts and two others (the only ones so far known), was published by Charles in 1895. The same scholar has also published an English translation with full commentary and introduction (1902). This has been reprinted in a convenient form by the S.P.C.K.

We owe to the Ethiopic Church the preservation of yet one more book in its entirety, namely, the *Ascension of Isaiah*. It was first published by Laurence in 1819 from a single manuscript, afterwards in 1877 by Dillmann from three manuscripts, but both of these editions have been superseded by Charles' edition of 1900. The same work exists in part in Latin. Of the Greek, which was the original language of the book, we have a considerable part preserved in a manuscript of the twelfth century, in which however the book has undergone recasting and rearrangement. The book is also known in Sclavonic. It dates, or at least the various parts of which it is composed date, from the first Christian century. One of these parts gives some information of interest about the early organization of the Christian Church. The opening part of the complete book, which is the work of a Jew, is known as the *Martyrdom of Isaiah*, the concluding part is the *Vision of Isaiah*, and these are united by a brief apocalyptic passage which is of Christian authorship. A convenient translation has been issued by S.P.C.K. (1917).

Of the books which may be called the Apocrypha of the New Testament, we have in Ethiopic only the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The Ethiopic text has been edited by d'Abbadie. It seems somewhat strange that we should have none of the works of the other Apostolic Fathers, nor even the *Didache*, except so far as this tract is preserved in the latter part of the Ethiopic *Didascalia* (see below, p. 63 ff.).

CHAPTER V

THE LITURGIES AND OTHER SERVICE BOOKS

LE BRUN in his *Explication de la Messe*,[1] in writing of the Ethiopic Liturgies, ventures to conjecture that one of them was the first of all to be committed to writing. His argument is that while the other liturgies were not written out till the end of the fourth century, 'St. Athanasius making a layman a bishop at one step, and sending him into a country where was neither bishop nor priest to instruct him, must naturally have given him the Liturgy in writing, and that the first Bishop Frumentius would leave it to his Church in order that the bishop who should succeed him might make use of it.' He also refers in proof to the fact that the Liturgy translated by Ludolf makes mention of no Fathers of the Church later than the 318 Orthodox of Nicaea whom St. Athanasius himself had seen. The former argument takes of course for granted that we can fully depend on the historical accuracy of the details as to the introduction of Christianity into Abyssinia.

Brightman,[2] on the other hand, when speaking of the date of the Liturgy found in the *Ethiopic Church*

[1] Edition of 1860, vol. ii, p. 484.
[2] *Liturgies, Eastern and Western*, p. lxxv.

Ordinances, says, 'the history of liturgical development in Abyssinia is too little known to justify even conjecture.' The relevance of this argument is not very clear, for in the context he is speaking of Bunsen's view that the Liturgy of the *Church Ordinances* dates from the second century, at which date, on any theory, there was no Christianity, and therefore no Liturgy in the country. We may, however, regard the words as true generally, and yet in spite of our want of knowledge of liturgical development in Abyssinia count it not unreasonable to argue on general grounds, as has been done in a former chapter, for the existence of a Liturgy, or Liturgies, in the Ethiopic Church in the first stage of its history. Why should Abyssinia, so closely connected as it was with Alexandria have lacked what other churches had?

The earliest form of Liturgy of the Church known to us is that already mentioned as found in the *Ethiopic Church Ordinances*. These are a part of the Ethiopic *Statutes of the Apostles* which themselves constitute a section of the larger *Sinodos* to which reference was made in the last chapter. In the Ethiopic *Church Ordinances* this Liturgy, or rather Anaphora, is connected with the service for the consecration of a bishop. Historically it not only has connexion, as Brightman points out, with the Clementine Liturgy found in the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, but also borrows some features from the *Canons of Hippolytus*. It is also the source from which the later Ethiopic Anaphora known as that of the Apostles was developed. This may easily

be seen by comparing the two in the translations given by Brightman.[1]

We have spoken above of various Liturgies of the Ethiopic Church. It would have been more precise to have spoken of various Anaphoras. It is the Anaphora, the central part of the service, which varies, while the common frame-work, the *ordo communis*, as it is generally called, remains invariable.

The Liturgy printed by Brightman, called by him the Liturgy of the Abyssinian Jacobites, consists of this *ordo communis* together with the Anaphora of the Apostles. The whole service is known in Ethiopic as the *Qeddâsê*, though this word is used also in another sense.[2] The phrase the *Qeddâsê* of St. Dioscorus, for example, may mean either the variable part, the Anaphora which bears the name of that saint, or the *ordo communis* together with the same Anaphora.

These Anaphoras of the Ethiopic are sixteen in number. Besides that already mentioned these are according to the order in which they are named by Brightman:

(1) Of our Lord Jesus Christ.
(2) Of our Lady Mary.
(3) Of St. Dioscorus.
(4) Of St. John Chrysostom.
(5) Of St. John the Evangelist.
(6) Of St. James the Lord's Brother.

[1] *Liturgies*, etc., pp. 189–93 and 228–43.
[2] It is also used in a third sense. (Cf. Brightman, *Liturgies*, etc., p. 579) referring to the 'proclamation of the divine holiness in the tersanctus.'

(7) Of St. Gregory the Armenian.
(8) Of the 318 Orthodox.
(9) Of St. Athanasius.
(10) Of St. Basil.
(11) Of St. Gregory Nazianzen.
(12) Of St. Epiphanius.
(13) Of St. Cyril (I).
(14) Of St. Cyril (II).
(15) Of James of Serug.

Two of these, namely, Nos. 6 and 14, are found only in one manuscript.

It would be outside the purpose of the present work to describe from a liturgical point of view the details of the Ethiopic Liturgy. It is enough to say that it shows, as would have been expected, the characteristics of the Alexandrian family. It is most closely connected with the Greek Liturgy of St. Mark and with the Coptic, St. Cyril. Like them it assigns a prominent part to the Deacon, and in it, as in them, the Great Intercession occurs in the middle of the Preface. Hammond is incorrect in saying[1] that 'it is unique in not having the "*Sursum Corda*" with the usual response.' It will be seen from Brightman these are to be found at the beginning of the Anaphora.

Four Lessons from the New Testament are read at each celebration of the Eucharist, the first from the Pauline Epistles, the second from the Catholic Epistles, the third from the Acts of the Apostles, and the fourth from the Gospels. This is another point of agreement with the Coptic Liturgy of St. Cyril.

[1] *Antient Liturgies*, Introduction, p. lvi.

The Ethiopic Liturgy was the first to be published of all the Oriental Liturgies. It was printed at Rome in 1548 along with the New Testament mentioned in the preceding chapter, a Latin version being given in the following year. What was then printed was the *ordo communis* along with three of the Anaphoras, viz. of the Apostles, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our Lady Mary. As it was printed at Rome the editor made it conform to the Roman Missal in certain respects. The words 'and the Son' (the *filioque* clause) were added to the Creed, and the form of the *Epiclesis* or Invocation was also mutilated.

The Ethiopic text of the *ordo communis* is most easily accessible in the appendix to Dr. Swainson's work on the Greek Liturgies published in 1884. In the title of the work it is described as the Coptic ordinary Canon of the Mass! An English translation is also added which bears obvious marks of its having been made by a foreigner. Dr. Swainson did not print the Anaphora, being mistaken in supposing that the manuscript from which the text was taken did not contain it.

The same three Anaphoras already mentioned as published at Rome were translated into English and published by Rodwell in his *Ethiopic Liturgies and Hymns* (vol. i, pp. 1–40).

Only two of the other thirteen Anaphoras have so far been published, those, namely, numbered 3 and 4 in the above list, that of St. Dioscorus (with a Latin translation) by Vansleb in 1661 from a Bodleian manuscript and that of St. John Chrysostom from the same manuscript by Dillmann in his *Ethiopic*

Chrestomathy in 1866. The last named is not accessible in any translation.[1]

Besides the Liturgies in the strict sense of the term there are also naturally several other offices of the Church. These are for the most part known only in manuscript form as few of them have been edited. The Baptismal Service (*M. Ṭemqat*, Book of Baptism) has been published with a German translation by Trumpp (Munich, 1878), and Dillmann has included in his *Chrestomathy* the Morning Prayers known as the *Testament of the Morning*. There is also a *Testament of the Evening*. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the Ritual for the Burial of the Dead (*M. Genzat*) and the Book of Hours (*M. Sâ'atât*).[2] These hours are night, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, compline. The *Weddâsê Amlâk*, or *Praises of God* is the name given to another form of prayers arranged according to the days of the week. The prayers in this collection are ascribed to various saints, those for Sunday to St. Cyril of Alexandria, those for Monday to St. Basil of Cæsarea, those for Tuesday and Wednesday to St. Ephraim the Syrian, and so on.

The Gebra Ḥemâmât, or *Acts of the Passion*, is a

[1] Neale and Littledale in an Appendix to their translations of the Liturgies of SS. Mark, James, etc., have given the words of the Formula of Institution as they occur in all the liturgies known to them. It is interesting to notice that in all, except three, of the Ethiopic Liturgies cited by them the words in the case of the Bread run 'This Bread is My Body, not, This is My Body.'

[2] There is also another *M. Sâ'atât* differing entirely from the one above mentioned. Cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Ethiopic Manuscripts in the British Museum*.

collection of lessons and homilies for the days of Holy Week from the Sunday of Hosannas (Palm Sunday) to Easter Eve. There are also collections of lessons connected with different saints. The *Nagara Mâryâm*, or History of Mary, is a collection of stories about her Life arranged for the twelve months of the year. There are besides this collections of homilies to be read on the Festivals of the Virgin; on those days (the twelfth day of each month) dedicated to Michael the Archangel; and on the Festivals of Gabriel and Raphael.

A Lectionary is also used containing the lessons for evening and morning prayer; for the evening two, from the Psalter and the Gospels; for the morning eight, in the somewhat strange order, Psalter, Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, Acts, Psalter, Gospels.

Of the Church Song of the Ethiopic Church very little that is definite seems to be known. It has been already mentioned that Yârêd was reputed to be its author. The story ran that he was caught up into Paradise and there received the precepts that were to guide him. These precepts are said to be contained in the *Mazgabâ Degguâ* (*Treasury of Plain-song*). The three modes of chanting used in the Church known respectively as *ge'ez*, *ezel* and *arârâi* are also attributed to his invention.

The general name for Church-song seems to *Degguâ*. So Dillmann and Basset use the word, though Littmann speaks of the *Degguâ* as if it were the name of a collection of Church Hymns. Possibly the word has both meanings. Besides the *Degguâ*, if

it be the name of a collection, there are others. Mention has been already made of the *Praises of Mary* and the *Organ of the Virgin*, or *Organ of Praises*. Both of these are collections of Hymns in honour of the Virgin arranged for the different days of the week. The *Psalter of Christ* is the name of another similar collection. These collections are sometimes interwoven in a similar arrangement. Thus a combination is found of the *Organ of the Virgin* and the *Praises of Mary*, and another in which these two are interwoven with the *Weddâsê Amlâk* named above.

The *Antiphonary* of the Church is known as the *Mawâse'et* (Answers). It consists of anthems for special festivals throughout the year. The *Mer'âf* also has hymns and chants for the festivals of the year, the difference between the two being apparently the type of hymn contained in each.

Certain types of hymns or poems were particularly popular. The *Qenê* were one of these. These were short hymns, often extemporized, which were sung after certain verses of the Psalter. Another well-known type was the *Salâm*, of which more will be said in a later chapter (see below, p. 67).

Lastly, the *Malke'a* or Likeness may be mentioned. This was a special favourite. In this type the poem consists of numerous stanzas. In each stanza one member of the saint's body is so to speak greeted. For example, the *Malke'a of Yârêd* commences thus : [1]

> Hail to the hairs of thy head which were not shorn for pleasure !

[1] In this translation I have not attempted to preserve the rhythm of the original.

Never was poured on them the defilement of ointment
with fragrance
O Yared, priest of the Altar on high in the heavenly
places,
Whither the glorious hand of the Father of all hath led
thee,
Lead thou me also with thee, that with thee I may chant
together.

Then the stanzas continue, greeting in succession the saint's head, face, eyebrows, eyes, ears, cheeks, nose, lips, mouth, teeth, etc. The final stanzas greet the feet, soles, heels, toes, toe-nails! Not a very elevating type of Christian poem.

CHAPTER VI

THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL BOOKS

CHIEF amongst these, and therefore first to be noticed here, are two, which however important from a doctrinal and ecclesiastical point of view, must be confessed to be extremely uninteresting from the point of view of literature. These are the *Qerlos* (Cyril) and the *Sinodos*. The first has already been mentioned as a product of the first period of the literature and the second has been named in chapter iv as a constituent part of the Ethiopic New Testament. Both of these works, or rather compilations, are alike in nature. They are collections of documents of theological import bearing on the early history of the Catholic Church, selected no doubt for translation into Ethiopic as being supposed to favour the monophysitism which was orthodox in Abyssinia.

Qerlos.—It is so named apparently because the documents which come first in it are connected with St. Cyril of Alexandria. The first document is a short biography of that saint,[1] which is followed by

[1] This is not contained in all the manuscripts. Indeed the majority of the manuscripts of the British Museum which have the *Qerlos* are without the words.

two treatises of his on the 'true faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The first of these is the one that was addressed to the Emperor Theodosius at the time of the Nestorian controversy, and the second is the former of the two treatises sent at the same time to the princesses, Pulcheria and the Emperor's other sisters. The fourth document is the dialogue between Cyril and Hermias, called Palladius in the Ethiopic version, on the theme that God is One. The other documents in the collection are homilies and letters on points of doctrine, namely, the Epistle of the Council of Ephesus to John of Antioch, the Epistles of John of Antioch to Cyril and of Cyril to John, seven discourses (two about Melchizedek) of Cyril, two of Theodotus of Ancyra, two of St. Epiphanius, and eight other discourses by various authors, including one by St. Gregory Thaumaturgus. The work ends with a disquisition of the Council of Nicæa on the Nicene Creed. The only parts of the Ethiopic text of the *Qerlos* which have been published are two of the letters and seven of the homilies which Dillmann included in his *Chrestomathy*, doubtless because they are such 'a splendid monument of the ancient language.'

Sinodos.—The second of these compilations, though so highly regarded by the Ethiopic Church, and though in parts of great interest historically is even more unattractive as literature than the *Qerlos*.

It is the *Corpus Juris Ecclesiastici* of the Church. The various elements of which it is composed are all found as a rule in the manuscripts in which it is contained, but they are not always in the same order

in all. These elements are the *Constitutions of the Apostles*, the *Statutes of the Apostles*, the *Canons of the Apostles*, followed by lists of the Canons of different councils, Nicæa, Gangra, Sardica, Antioch, Neo-Cæsarea, Ancyra, and Laodicæa. Various discourses and treatises are also included.

(*a*) An exposition of the decalogue ascribed to St. John Chrysostom.
(*b*) On the Essence of the Holy Trinity.
(*c*) How to distinguish between good and evil.
(*d*) On the fear of God.
(*e*) On the ancient people and a refutation of the Jews.
(*f*) A discourse of St. Gregory of Armenia against the Jews.
(*g*) Hortatory discourse to believers who desire to walk in the paths of wisdom and knowledge.
(*h*) The discourse of the Nicene Fathers on the Holy Trinity.
(*i*) The penitential canons of our Lord to Peter.

The Creed of Africa, that is, the Athanasian Creed, is also found amongst these in some manuscripts.

Some of the earlier portions of the *Sinodos* have been published, viz. by Fell in 1871 and by Horner in 1904.

Qalêmentos (Clement). This is another work, which is contained in various manuscripts, but is strangely left unnoticed by Littmann. It contains the 'Instructions of St. Peter to his disciple Clement.' It is divided by the manuscripts into seven chapters. If the titles of these give any clue to their contents, the subject-matter of the book must be somewhat comprehensive. The first chapter contains an account of the creation and a summary of Scripture history up to

the time of Jehoram of Judah. The titles of the remaining chapters are :—

(2) Mysteries revealed by Peter to Clement.
(3) The power and the wonders which God displayed to Peter.
(4) Discourse of Peter to Clement concerning what shall take place on earth for mercy to mankind.
(5) Ordinance of the Christian Church given by our Lord to Peter.
(6) On the Rod of Moses.
(7) The Vision of Simon bar Yona.

Didascalia.—The Ethiopic *Didascalia*, like the *Sinodos*, comes probably from the second period of the literature. It seems to have been translated from Arabic inasmuch as it agrees very closely with the earlier of the two Arabic recensions of the same document. The *Didascalia* in its various versions has been the subject of much discussion in recent years. It is a work which was originally composed in Greek, probably in the middle of the third century. Its general character is well summed up by Bishop Wordsworth who speaks of it as 'a somewhat rambling discourse on Church life and society.' The whole work was afterwards, somewhere in the fourth century, incorporated in the compilation known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*. The original Greek *Didascalia* has been lost, but the work is known to us now in various versions besides the Ethiopic. These, though they all bear the same title, do not all contain the same subject-matter. The Syriac version has the substance of the first six books of the *Apostolic Constitutions*; the Latin, of which only fragments are extant, contains portions of Books I–VI and VIII; the Arabic version

found in most manuscripts also runs parallel with *Apostolic Constitutions*, Books I–VI, but has some extra chapters not found in the *Constitutions* at all.[1] The Ethiopic differs from all these. It includes, like the others, the substance of Books I–VI, but adds afterwards the substance of Book VII, a book which in its early chapters is an expansion of the much earlier *Didache*, and which contains at the end some liturgical matter, prayers to be used at baptism and other times unspecified. Unfortunately, a fairly long section is now lacking in the Ethiopic *Didascalia* in this concluding part, but this may be merely due to accident, for the title of one of the chapters seems to imply the former existence of matter now wanting.

The *Didascalia*, then, in its Ethiopic version probably represents a form intermediate between the shorter *Didascalia*, best represented by the Syriac version, and the complete work found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*. It may, of course, be argued that the Ethiopic version is an abbreviation of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and not one of its component parts, but, if so, why was no part of Book VIII included? It seems more reasonable to suppose that we have in the Ethiopic *Didascalia*, and in the earlier Arabic recension already mentioned, representatives of an enlarged *Didascalia* which was compiled in Egypt.

The Ethiopic *Didascalia* with an English translation was edited in an incomplete form in 1834 by T. H. Platt. He had only one manuscript, which

[1] They are however allied to certain parts of the *Testament of Our Lord*.

contained only the first half of the work. An English translation of the whole by the present writer has been included by the S.P.C.K. in the *Translations of Early Documents* (Series IV).

Senkesar.—We pass now to what may be called the Breviary of the Ethiopic Church. It is known as the *Senkesar* or *Seneksar* (*Synaxar*) and has been alluded to in chapter iii as having been translated in its original form from Arabic in the third period of the literature. In this form it was simply the *Synaxar* of the Coptic Church done into Ethiopic. It was, however, afterwards enlarged, chiefly by the addition of notices of saints and martyrs belonging to the Church of Abyssinia, as well as by short rhymed poems in honour of all those who are commemorated. This latter feature is peculiar to the Ethiopic *Senkesar*. According to Guidi, who has edited several sections of the whole work in the *Patrologia Orientalis*, the manuscripts clearly show these two stages. For the month of *Sanê* (June–July), for example, he used three manuscripts. One of these comes from the fifteenth century, being thus contemporary, or almost so, with the time of its translation from Arabic. The others, which contain the additions, are much later, coming from the eighteenth century. On the 29th of *Sanê* the list of commemorations (each followed by a *salâm*, that is, a short poem of the type just mentioned) is as follows: (1) Memorial of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, (2) The Holy Martyrs, the seven ascetics of Tuna and their 140 companions, (3) The Holy Martyrs, Abbâ Hor, Abbâ Besoy and Daydara their

mother, (4) Têwodros (Theodore), son of David, King of Ethiopia, (5) Mark, King of Rome, (6) Two-fold translation of the body of St. 'Amda Mikâ'êl, once in the reign of Eskender, and again in the reign of Lebna Dengel. The last three of these, two of which are commemorations of Abyssinian worthies, are found only in the later manuscripts.

As examples of the commemorations peculiarly Ethiopic may be given the following :—

Sanê 12 (June 6) Lâlibalâ. 'On this day is also (the feast of) Lâlibalâ, King of Ethiopia, the blessed and pure, and the seer of the mystery of the heavens. This saint his parents reared from the day of his birth in the fear of God; and when he grew up and reached the age of manhood, the king, his elder brother, feared that he should inherit the kingdom. Thereupon envy seized on him, and he sat and called him. And when he (Lâlibalâ) came and stood before him, he trumped up a charge against him, and commanded, and he was beaten with many stripes from the third hour of the day unto the ninth. And after this he commanded him to be set before him, and when he stood before him, the king and all his officers were amazed when they saw that no hurt had befallen him. It was that an angel had protected him. And then the king said unto him, 'Forgive me, my brother, for what I have done unto thee.' Then were they reconciled and at peace, the one with the other. And God regarded his torments on that day, and made him to inherit, and gave him the kingdom. And when he became king, he bethought him how he might please God, and gave much alms to the poor and needy. And when God saw the strength of his love, the angel of God appeared unto him in a dream and carried him away unto God. And He showed him how to build the churches of varied shape; and he did as God had showed him. And when he had finished building these churches,

he delivered the kingdom to his brother's son and then rested in peace. 'May God have mercy upon us by the prayer of this saint for ever and ever.' Then follows, as usual, the short-rhymed poem known as the *salâm*. The following version of this, which does not attempt to preserve the rhythm of the original, will give some idea of the style of these.

> Hail! King Lâlibalâ, who in dry stone
> With wisdom churches built, nor mortar used.
> To show that his should be the kingly power,
> (People and kings he charmed with honey sweet)
> Bees round him swarmed the day that he was born.

On *Sane* 13 (June 7), there is a commemoration of another native saint, a princess.

> And on this day too is the feast of St. Magdalâwit, martyr of Christ, the mother of Fânu'êl, of the family of the princes of Dawâro, of the seed royal. She was an Israelitess of the race of the glorious King Saifa Ar'ed.[1] The Moslems tortured her cruelly in the time of Grañ with various sore torments and she ended her martyrdom by being crucified, and (thus) followed Christ her Lord. She received the crown of martyrdom in the kingdom of the heavens. Her prayer and her blessing, and the gift of her aid be with us for ever. Amen.

On *Sanê* 20 the Old Testament saint Elisha is commemorated. The *salâm* in his honour is here added as another example of the general type.

> To Elisæus hail! who of Elias asked
> A double part on his ascent to heaven.
> He found therein a power that mighty proved;
> Twice he prevailed therewith to raise the dead
> And twice therewith he parted Jordan's stream.[2]

[1] That is Newâya Krestos (1344–1370).
[2] The two resurrections from the dead refer to the Shunammite's son and the man raised by Elisha's bones.

The Testament of our Lord.—The so-called *Testament* (*Kidân*) *of our Lord Jesus Christ* comes from an earlier period than the *Senkesar*. The Ethiopic version is probably derived from the Arabic. The original of this work was doubtless Greek, but the date of its composition is quite uncertain. Besides the Ethiopic version there are versions in Syriac and Arabic, and fragments of a Latin and Coptic version are also extant. The first part of the work is Apocalyptic in form containing revelations supposed to have been given by our Lord after His resurrection, telling of the signs which shall usher in His second coming, the doom of various nations, and the advent of Antichrist. This is followed by chapters which are akin in subject-matter to the numerous works generally grouped together under the name of *Church Orders*. These chapters give, that is to say, diverse regulations about Church worship and discipline, and include certain forms of prayer to be used on specified occasions. After these comes the 'Word which our Lord Jesus Christ spake to His eleven disciples in Galilee after He rose from the dead.' This section is also Apocalyptic, but is without any apparent logical order. Its first part is similar to the opening section of the Testament, but this is followed by other chapters treating of the Birth, Ministry, Resurrection, and second coming of our Lord (this is to be in the 150th year between Pentecost and Passover),

The double parting of the Jordan is not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. In 2 Kings ii. 14 the Ethiopic version, like the LXX and Vulgate, speaks of a double 'smiting' of the waters by Elisha, the first unsuccessful and the second successful.

prophecies as to the rise of heresy (Cerinthus and Simon are specially mentioned), promises to the apostles, denunciation of sinners, etc. The work concludes with our Lord's Ascension to heaven at the end of the discourse.

This latter part has been published (1912) in the *Patrologia Orientalis* (9. iii) under the somewhat misleading title of *Le Testament en Galilée de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ*. It is not the whole *Testament*, but only the concluding part. No English translation of the Ethiopic version has been published, but there is a translation of the Syriac version into English by Dr. Cooper and Bishop Maclean, with full introduction and notes (1902).

Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth.—I pass next to give some account of a somewhat remarkable book, which is in this respect historically interesting that it was at one time mistaken for the *Book of Enoch*. It seems to be an original Ethiopic work though modelled of course on the pattern of Enoch and similar Apocalypses. It belongs, according to Guidi, to the fifteenth century, and the single manuscript [1] in which it is known may possibly be the autograph of the author. This manuscript was acquired in the seventeenth century by a French bibliophile named Peiresc. How it came into his possession is not certain. It may have been sent to him from Abyssinia by a French adventurer, Vermellius by name, who was for a time commander-in-chief of the Abyssinian army. Peiresc is known to have sent

[1] Apart from a copy of it made by Vansleb.

him out books on mathematics and architecture and to have asked for Ethiopic books in exchange. He thought when he got it that he had found the *Book of Enoch* for which he had been searching. It was the famous Ludolf who discovered the error, and he vented his disappointment by describing the book's contents as 'futiles et absurdissimas narrationes, crassae ac putidae fabulae, etc.' Much that is in the book deserves indeed the stigma.

It begins, after a chapter on the mystery of the Trinity, with the creation of the six heavens, the orders of angels, the earth, the sea, the stars, birds, fish, beasts and man. In this section comes quite a Miltonic description of the struggle between Michael and Satan. Then follows an account of the temptation and fall. All the birds refused to show Satan the way to Eve. He then applied in succession to the elephant, the leopard, the hyaena, the bear, the boar, and the 'serg, a strange animal who now lives in the middle of the sea.' All these refused. At last the young Camel agreed and mounted on its back the tempter came to Eve. The tree of which Adam and Eve ate (at the third hour of the morning) was called the 'sezen'. The second part contains an account of the Deluge and a list of Noah's descendants, together with some notices of the Pentateuchal story up to the time of the building of the Tabernacle. Then a wide interval is passed over and the larger part of the book is taken up with a description of the vision of the restored Temple at the end of the *Book of Ezekiel*. The concluding section is Christian, referring to the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ.

I have spoken of the description of the fight between Michael and Satan as Miltonic. Indeed, though prosaic, it reminds one of some of the descriptions in 'Paradise Lost.' 'Satan,' we read, 'said, I will set my throne above the stars, and will be made like unto the High and Lofty One.' Then there was a great war in heaven; Michael prepared a great host which God reviewed. The numbers of the heavenly army are given in tedious detail. There were 600,000 targeteers, 800,000 with fiery swords, 700,000 with slings of fire, etc. In the battle Satan first breaks the ranks of his enemies, and they take to flight. Once again they are defeated. The third attack, as in Milton, is the decisive one. God gives Michael the Cross of Light inscribed with the name of the Trinity. When Satan sees this, he is routed.

Again we have in Paradise Lost the well-known description of Satan.

> His other parts besides
> Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
> Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
> As whom the fables name of monstrous size.

These other parts, left by Milton to the imagination, are fully detailed here. 'His head was a great mountain, his mouth forty cubits wide, his eyebrows the length of three days' march, the spittle that flowed from his mouth was as the Jordan, etc.'

An anecdote that occurs in the first part may be noticed as it shows how the power of the Archangel Michael was regarded in the Church of Abyssinia:

> A man never did any good thing in his life, but every month celebrated Michael's feast and had pity on the

poor. When he died, the demons rejoiced and came to claim him, but God said, Choose one of these two things. Either Michael shall hide him and you will seek, or you shall hide him and Michael seek. They chose the former, and concealed him in a corner of Gehenna. Three times Michael plunged into Sheol, and the third time found and delivered the man, rescuing many others also at the same time.

CHAPTER VII

HAGIOLOGY, CHRONICLES AND ROMANCE

LIVES of saints were, according to Littmann,[1] first written in the fourteenth century. These were, even in the case of native saints, borrowed from outside sources. Later, *Lives* were written, which were in a sense more original as not having any foreign work as their basis. Even in these *Lives* the outside models were not entirely abandoned, but a stereotyped pattern was adhered to.

It would be useless to enumerate here all these *Lives*. Such as have been published are given in a list at the end of this chapter. The word that is used for '*Life*' is a somewhat peculiar one. It is *gadl*, which, according to its root meaning had the signification of 'conflict, struggle.' When applied to the saints, it seems to be used in the sense of the Latin *Acta*. It is unnecessary, and indeed misleading, to translate it literally, as Budge attempts to do in giving to the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* the title *Contendings of the Apostles*.

Littmann,[2] following the Russian scholar Turaiev, divides the Abyssinian Saints historically into those of five periods.

(1) *The Axumitic Period.*—To this belong he 'Nine Saints,' and Yârêd the founder of Church song.

[1] p. 243.

[2] p. 244.

Of the 'Nine' Aragâwi is perhaps the best known. King Kâlêb (Elesbaan) the hero of the wars in South Arabia is also amongst the saints of this period.

(2) *The Period of Transition.*—From this not many names have come down. Two of the kings of the Zâguê dynasty have been canonized, Lâlibalâ and Na'akueto la Ab. To these may be added the greatest name of all, that of Takla Hâymânot.

(3) *The Period of Persecution.*—This was a time of contention between Church and State. The cause of this was partly moral, partly ecclesiastical. King 'Amda Ṣeyon had married his step-sister an action which caused protests on the part of the clergy. This first, but there were also differences of opinion as to Sabbath observance and the date of Christmas. Those who were the protagonists on the clerical side against the State were naturally honoured as saints afterwards. Of these may be mentioned, Baṣalota Mikâ'êl, Filpos (Philip) of Dabra Libânos, Aron the wonder-worker, Filpos of Dabra Bizan, and his pupil Yoḥannes. Two other names should be added, Ewosṭâtêwos (Eustathius), the founder of an order of ascetics named after him, and one of the kings Têwodros (Theodore) I.

(4) *The Period of Zar'a Yâ'qob.*—This king and his wife were both canonized, and so was one of his generals, 'Amda Mikâ'êl. Mabâ'a Ṣeyon and Beṣua Amlâk also belong to this period.

(5) *The Period of the Franks* (*Portuguese*).—The wars with the Moslems and Gallas and the religious struggles between the Jesuits and the 'orthodox' naturally produced many names to be afterwards

honoured as saints. Two kings who reigned during this time were canonized, Lebna Dengel and Galâ-udêwos. The foundress of an order of nuns, Walatta Petros, whose biography is of great importance for the light which it throws on the contemporary religious life, must also be noticed. The list of saints comes down to as late as 1700. Two of the last names to be included were those of King Yoḥannes I and Zar'a Buruk.

In order to show the type of literature contained in these Lives, I have judged it best not to make extracts from several, but to describe at some length one of the most important, the *Gadl* of King Lâlibalâ.

I have selected it, not only on account of the description of the remarkable Churches which are mentioned therein, but also because it is one of the earliest. Two manuscripts of this *Life* are found in the British Museum.

Portions of one of these have been edited with a very paraphrastic and erroneous French translation by Perruchon (Paris, 1892). The life is in the form of homilies or discourses. After a tedious and difficult introduction, which treats, amongst other things, of the Trinity and the Life of Christ and the praises of Lâlibalâ in general, the writer, or orator, proceeds to recount the birth of the saint in simple language quite biblical in character.

> Now there was a city of the cities of Ethiopia which was named Roḥa, the birthplace of the blessed Lâlibalâ, and there was in that city a man of a very great and noble family, exceeding rich in gold and silver, in raiment and fine apparel, in manservants and maidservants. The

name of the man was Jan Seyum,[1] and he took him a wife, and begat a son, this blessed and holy (saint) who was in mystery called Lâlibalâ. Its interpretation I will declare unto you, (and) for what reason he was called by this name Lâlibalâ. When his mother bare him, many bees came and swarmed around him, even as they swarm around honey. And his mother saw that the bees swarmed and thronged around her son as the host surrounds the king. And when she saw this, there descended on her the spirit of prophecy, and she said, 'The bees know that the child is great.' Therefore she named him Lâlibalâ, which means, 'The bees know his grace.'

When he grew up, his brother, Ḥarbây who was King of Ethiopia envied him, and tried, with the help of one of his sisters, to poison him, but though the poisoned cup caused the death of a deacon who tasted it first, it did Lâlibalâ but slight hurt.

God then sent an angel who carried the saint through all the heavens, till he was in the presence of God in the seventh. There he was shown ten wondrous churches made each of a single stone. The Almighty then said unto him, 'Be not anxious for the kingdom, (thinking) that I have set thee for any transitory glory, but for the sake of the churches which thou hast seen that thou mayest build them—for this cause have I anointed thee with the oil of the kingdom and have made thee the Anointed of my people, until thou hast finished these my sanctuaries.'

After three days he is brought back to earth. He meets with further persecution from his brother, and resolves to retire into the desert. While he was in

[1] The first part of this name is Amharic and not Ethiopic

the desert, the angel who had taken him up to heaven appeared to him one day and said to him, 'To-morrow at this same hour a maiden shall come unto thee.' And he described the signs by which he might know her, and the garments which she should wear, and he said unto him, 'She shall be to thee to wife, and she is elect even as thou, and she shall be to thee as thine own heart. The beauty of her acts is not less than thine own. She is a servant of God, and from her thou shalt learn many good works.' It happened as the angel had foretold. Lâlibalâ met the maiden, sought her hand in marriage, and for a while lived happily with her in her father's house.

Hearing of his marriage his brother sent for Lâlibalâ, and when he came he was accused before the king of having taken to wife a maiden who was betrothed to another. At the king's orders he was scourged, but though the scourging lasted for some hours, Lâlibalâ was miraculously preserved from hurt. He then retired with his wife, Masqal Kebra, to the desert where they were miraculously fed like Elijah of old.

There follows then a visit of the saint to Jerusalem in company with Gabriel but this part of the story has not been published. On his return from the Holy Land he rejoins his wife, and both of them go to the royal court along with Gabriel and Michael. Here the way had been prepared for their reception. Our Lord had appeared to Ḫarbây the king in a dream, and bidden him go seek his brother and set him on the throne. The king obeyed, went to meet his brother and they were reconciled. They then return to the capital where Lâlibalâ is proclaimed king

under the name of Gabra Masqal. When on the throne he by no means changed his former manner of life, but fasted and prayed and gave alms as before.

The next section is chiefly concerned with miracles ascribed to the saint. One example will suffice.

> There was a certain rich woman and as she ate the flesh of beasts, she began to eat-the-flesh [1] of men also in her calumny. And she falsely accused Lâlibalâ of evil deeds, blaspheming against him. And (one day) she was eating flesh, but the flesh choked her, and would not go down or come forth, but stayed in her throat suffocating her. And her eyes started from their sockets from the grievous pain of the choking. Then she cried out in her heart saying, I have sinned against thee, O Gabra Masqal, my lord, the Anointed of God. From henceforth I will not speak evil of thee, nor remember thy name for evil but for good. As she said this, the piece of flesh came forth with (a rush of) blood from her throat, and fell to the ground.

We now reach the concluding section, the real subject of the Life. Lâlibalâ prepares workmen and materials to construct the churches on the pattern which he had seen in heaven. The churches at least are a reality, for they still exist. They are cut from the solid rock, and so are ' of one stone.' They have been described by various travellers.[2] The names of the ten churches are given in the Life and these agree for the most part with the accounts given by the travellers. The Life however goes on to say that in these works Lâlibalâ was aided by the angels, who

[1] To ' eat the flesh ' of any one is, according to the idiom of different Semitic languages, to calumniate him.

[2] By Francisco Alvarez in the sixteenth century, by Rohlfs in 1870, A. Raffray in 1882, and by G. Simon in 1885.

added at night thrice as much again as the workmen had built during the day. No wonder the orator adds at the end of his account. 'Any man of Ethiopia who hears the story of the churches made from one stone and does not go to the holy city of Roha is like a man who desires not to see the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

His work finished, Lâlibalâ endowed the churches he had built and soon after died, having first made preparation for the return of the kingdom to the house of Israel, that is, to the so-called Solomonic line of kings.[1]

That Lâlibalâ was an historical personage need not be disputed, but beyond the account in this Life there seems to be nothing to connect him with the building of these churches. The other details of the Life are obviously not such as to inspire much confidence in its author in historical matters.

When we return to the *Chronicles of the Kings* we have more or less contemporary documents, particularly in the case of the later kings. These works are chronicles, not history. They are far more concerned with relating of the different movements of the king than with giving a real idea of the history of the country and the people. The details of these annals are entered by years and months, and, in the longer chronicles, by the days of the month. Much that is now quite without interest is recorded, but these chronicles may be regarded as giving reliable

[1] This does not quite agree with the account given in the *Senkesar* see above, p. 67.

information as to the civil and religious constitution of the kingdom, whenever these are touched on.

There are *Chronicles* extant of all the kings from Zar'a Yâqob to Sarṣa Dengel, then during a time of anarchy there was apparently a break. The *Chronicles* are however commenced again in the reign of Susenyos and they continue down to the present time, with the exception of the reign of Fâsiladas, of which no account seems to have been written. The majority of these *Chronicles* have already been edited, chiefly by Pereira at Lisbon and Perruchon at Paris.

In addition to these longer chronicles there is an *Abridged Chronicle* which is extant in more than one form, but the exact relationship of this to the longer chronicles has not yet been investigated. One form of this *Abridged Chronicle* has been published by Basset, with a French translation and notes.

The style in which these chronicles are written may best be judged by some extracts. As a first example I take the commencement of the *Chronicle* of the King of Kings A' lâf Sagad (Yoḥannes I).

> 'In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, One God. We begin to write the story—sweeter than honey and sugar, more to be desired than gold and the precious topaz stone, which draweth the mouth to tell and the ear to hear—of the honoured and great king of kings A' lâf Sagad by the grace of God, who was called by the name of Yoḥannes the Evangelist. Name agreeth with name, and faith with faith, and works with works. He (the Evangelist) driveth forth demons when men resort to his tomb, and healeth every disease and trouble when men anoint themselves with the dust (of the place) where his holy body resteth. And may God bring our writing to a (happy) end.' Amen.

'This righteous king was the son of the King of kings Sâlam Sagad (Fâsiladas), the son of the King of kings Seltân Sagad (Susenyos), and was born of the noble lady Ehṭa Krestos, the daughter of a man of the nobles of Walaqâ, whose name was Aqâryos. And after he was born, he was carefully trained in counsel and discipline, and he learnt the Holy Writings, that is, the Old and the New (Testaments), and when he grew up he was taught to hurl the lance and to shoot the bow, to ride the horse and to swim in the sea. And his father took for him to wife (a lady) whose name was Sablâ Wangel, the daughter of a nobleman, whose name was Gabra Masqal of the people of Mandabây whom he loved. He (Yoḥannes) loved his wife, and she him, for they twain were united in purity and the fear of God. And Yoḥannes was good before God and man, for he loved the poor and needy, the widows and the orphans. He wept with those that wept, and rejoiced with those that rejoiced. And for this cause all the men of the city, the judges and the officers loved him more than all the king's sons his brothers.'

These *Chronicles* may well be included in a history of Christian Literature, for they are as much interested in ecclesiastical as in political matters. That this is so, will be seen from the following extracts from the same Chronicle. During the first year of the king's reign (1667) an account is given of two Franks (Europeans) who had come from Rome disguised as Egyptians pretending to be envoys of the Patriarch of Alexandria. When they were taken prisoners, the king :

> Gathered together all the judges, the elders, the doctors, and all the great men of the kingdom, and took

counsel to try and examine them (the Franks) touching their faith. Then it became clear and evident that they were men of Rome, and believed in the faith of the unclean heretic Leo, for they spake with their own lips saying, There are two Natures in Christ. Then the king and his men answered and said, We say not thus, but we say that there is no duality in Christ after the union of the Godhead and Manhood without confusion or intermingling. We believe in the faith of the holy Dioscorus, true in speech. And now it were good for us to take counsel concerning these men, lest they lead astray our people and renew in the minds of the heretics their faith which has now grown cold. Then they passed judgment, and the judges condemned them, saying, It is right that they should die, first, because in their words they divide Christ in twain, as did Leo their father, secondly, because the ancestors of these deceivers put to death our metropolitan Abbâ Semcon, and slew our fathers the orthodox teachers, and many of our faithful brethren who said there is but one Nature in Christ. The day of their death was the Day of Hosanna,[1] on the 19th of *Magabit*.[2]

Later in the reign (1678) we read of one John, and envoy who came from Armenia with a precious relic, a bone of the hand of St. Eustathius. Though he was introduced by a letter from the Patriarch of Alexandria, a Synod is summoned to test his orthodoxy. After the reading of the Patriarch's letter, the following questions are put to him through an interpreter :—

In whom believest thou ?

I believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are Three as to personality, and One as to Godhead.

[1] That is, Palm Sunday. [2] That is, March to April.

Which of the Three Persons put on flesh of men?
It was the Son who put on flesh of men of the Holy Virgin Mary.

Has Christ but one Nature or two?
The Nature of Christ is One, as say Athanasius, and Cyril and Dioscorus and their adherents, the men of Armenia and Syria and Egypt and Ethiopia.

Whom dost thou adore?
I adore the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and I adore our Lady Mary, the mother of God, and I adore the Holy Cross.

If Christmas or Epiphany fall on Wednesday or Friday, dost thou fast or eat?
I do not fast, but eat whatsoever is eaten during the days of Pentecost.[1]

The last quotation is a good index of what was considered orthodox and important in Abyssinia.

As a specimen of the style of the Abridged Chronicle a brief extract from the account of the reign of Lebna Dengel, may be given from the *Chronicle* edited by Basset.

In this month of *yakâtit* (the sixth month, February to March) on the third day (of the month) Gechê Ambâ Nagast (i.e. the royal *Ambâ*)[2] was destroyed and pillaged. There was found there much gold and raiment of silk, the treasures of the ancient kings, which had been gathered there from (the time of) Yekuno Amlâk to the reign of

[1] That is, from Easter to Pentecost.
[2] *Ambâ* is the name given to the hills of peculiar formation found in Abyssinia. They are of the shape of truncated cones, and are often, as in the case in the text, made into mountain fortresses.

Lebna Dengel, and other treasures whose sum none knoweth save God alone.[1] Then was gold as stones, and raiment of silk as leaves; the price of the *heleq* (ὁλκή) was 30 *amlês*[2] and that of an ox one ounce. The Israelites[3] who dwelt there were slain with the sword, and some were hurled into the sea for their faith's sake. So did the *wazir* Mudjahid and Amdush. And after this in the year of Matêwos[4] (Matthew) our king Lebna Dengel entered into rest on the fifth of *maskaram*, (the first month, September to October) and he slept with his fathers, and the years of his reign were thirty-two.[5] And he was buried in Dâmo in the convent of Abbâ Aragâwi.

The work next to be noticed claims to be historical, but perhaps might have been better included amongst the ecclesiastical and theological works. It deserves at any rate some mention as being in the judgment of its editor an original work, and not a translation as nearly all similar works are. As it is connected with the Jewish controversy, the editor supposes that it may have been written for the benefit of the Falashas or Abyssinian Jews. The book is found in but one manuscript (D'Abbadie 51) and is entitled *Sargis of Aberga*. It is an account of what happened in the time of the Emperor Herâqâl (Heraclius). He made

[1] Basset translates this last phrase in an absurd way: 'et d'autres richesses innombrables, sans possesseur.' The Divine name can never mean 'possessor', though one of its component parts may.

[2] The *amlê* was a cake of salt of fixed size used as corrency.

[3] That is, the members of the royal family of the Solomonic line.

[4] The years in the Ethiopic reckoning go in cycles of four, each dedicated to one of the Evangelists. Leap Year belongs to St. Luke.

[5] Basset adds in his translation, 'and thirty-two days.' The words are not in the Ethiopic text which he prints.

Sargis governor of two places which appear in the MS. as Afragyâ and Tartagyâ (Africa and Carthage ?), and ordered him to baptize the Jews who had been converted to the Lord. Many Jews are forced by Sargis to accept baptism. The story is written by one of those so treated, Joseph by name. In the treatise another of the same Jews who was afterwards convinced of the truth of Christianity explains its doctrines to his fellow-countrymen. The questions discussed are, the Coming of Christ, His Birth, Life, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, the genealogy of the Virgin, and the Christian Church.

Mention has been already made in Chapter iii of several translations into Ethiopic of historical works in Arabic. These were in the second period of the literature, the translation of the *Chronicle of Joseph ben Gorion the Jew;* in the third, the *Universal History of George the Egyptian;* and in the last period, the *Chronicle of John of Nikiou* and the *Universal History of Abū Shākir.* As these are merely translations of foreign works it seems unnecessary to give extracts from them.

It is otherwise with the brief *History of the Gallas* which comes also from the last period. We have here to do with an original work of a monk named Baḥrey. His description of the men of his nation is of considerable interest, and he is quite impartial in the comparison he makes between them and the Gallas. The main part of his book is an account of the Gallas, their leaders and the wars waged by them against Abyssinia. It is near the close of the book that the passage to which I refer comes.

'The wise,' he writes, 'make many enquiries and say, How did the Gallas conquer us, when we are many in number and have many weapons of war? Some have said, The Lord hath permitted this because of our sins. And there are others who have said, It is because of the division of our people into ten classes, nine of which do not go to war, and are not ashamed of their cowardice; and only the tenth fights and wars as well as may be. If our numbers are great, yet those who can fight are few, and there are many who do not go to war One class of these is that of the monks, who are without number. Some are monks from their childhood, like the writer of this *Chronicle* and such as he, persuaded thereto by the monks at the time of their education; others become monks through fear of war. Another class are called *dabtera*.[1] They study the Scriptures and all manner of things relating to the priests; they clap with their hands, and applaud with their feet (in the public worship), but are not ashamed of their cowardice. They take as their pattern the Levites and priests, the sons of Aaron. The third class . . . guard the Law, and also themselves, by not fighting.[2] The fourth class consists of the guardians of the wives of the dignitaries and the princesses—strong men in the prime of life. They do not go to war, but say, We are the guardians of the women.'

[1] Stern thus describes this class: 'The Debterahs (sic), or scribes, constitute the lowest, but most influential body in the church. These worthies enjoy no ecclesiastical rank, are under no ecclesiastical discipline, and yet no service can be properly performed unless they take part in it. Their chief duty consists in chanting the Psalms and Liturgy, but their uncouth gesticulation and discordant shouting, instead of elevating devotion, tend rather, at least in European estimation, to convert the service of God into a sinful burlesque, and the sanctuary into a bedlam. The scanty learning of the country is exclusively monopolized by this order.' (*Life*, etc., by Isaacs, p. 182.)

[2] There seems to be a play on the words here which I have endeavoured to bring out in translation.

The next classes mentioned are, in order, the land-owners, the labourers, the merchants, the craftsmen (smiths, tailors, etc.), the musicians (singers, drummers, harpists). This last class are beggars.

> They bless him who gives to them, and give him (in return) idle praise and empty rewards; and if they curse him who gives them nothing, it is accounted by them no blame, for, say they, It is our custom. These also keep aloof from war. The tenth class are those who take spear and shield, and understand war, and follow the king on his expeditions; and since these are so few, our land is overcome.
>
> Amongst the Gallas there are none of these nine classes which we have mentioned, but they are all skilled in war from the least to the greatest. Therefore do they destroy us and slay us. Now those who say that (the Gallas) slay us by the command of God take as their reason the conquest of the children of Israel and their destruction at the hands of the kings of Persia and Babylon; and, say they, if the mighty (always) conquered, who would ask help of God, the High and Lofty One? and if the many conquered the few, the word of the Scripture would be vain, which saith, One shall put to flight a thousand, and two shall pursue ten thousand.*
>
> Now you, ye wise, will know whether the words of the former disputants, or the latter, are true.

We pass once more to romance when we come to the work called the *Glory of Kings*, or *Kebra Nagast*. Not that it is so accounted in Abyssinia. There it passes for genuine history. It is a work written in the thirteenth century with a very definite purpose. Indeed the purpose was twofold, to trace back the origin of kingly power to the creation of the world, and to extol the glory of the kings of Abyssinia by attempting to give an historical foundation for their

claims to be descended from Solomon. The following description of the book will make it clear that though the names are the names of the Bible and Church History, yet the ideas are the ideas of the *Arabian Nights.*[1]

The work consists, roughly speaking, of three parts. In the first it is told that Gregory Thaumaturgus (Gregory the Illuminator is meant) declared at the council of the 318 orthodox Fathers (at Nicæa) that during the fifteen years which he had spent in the pit, he had meditated on human history. He then recounts the history of the kings from Adam to Shem, and how God had given to Shem the rainbow, and promised the Ark in the future, as a sign that He would not again send a deluge. Then the rest of the biblical story is narrated up to the time of David.

In the second part the speaker is Domitius, who is described as the Patriarch of Constantinople. He relates that he had found in the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople a book in which was written that the whole world belongs to the King of Rome and the King of Ethiopia, both being descendants of Solomon, the latter the first-born. Then follows the 'history' of the kings of Ethiopia. When Solomon was engaged in building the Temple, he sent to all the merchants of the world to get the materials he needed. Amongst these was Tamrin the chief merchant of Mâkedâ, Queen of Ethiopia. On his return from Jerusalem Tamrin told the queen of all the wonders of

[1] This account I have abridged from that given by Littmann who has, in his turn, taken the summary he gives from Bezold's edition of the work (Munich, 1905).

that city and of Solomon's wisdom, with the result that she determined to go thither herself. She was splendidly received there, given a place to reside in, and loaded with presents every day. In consequence of her conversations with Solomon the queen became a believer in the true God. Before her departure there was a great feast in the royal palace. Mâkedâ remained in the palace for the night, for Solomon had sworn to her that no harm would come to her, if she swore in return to do none to his property. During the night she became thirsty and rose to drink water, but Solomon reminded her of her oath. She answered, Be thou free of thine oath, but let me drink. Next morning the queen took her departure, receiving from Solomon a ring as a sign of remembrance. On the way home she bare a son to whom she gave the name Baina-lehkem (i.e. bin al ḥakim, son of the wise).[1] This son, when he was grown, returned to Jerusalem with the ring. He was received with honour and pressed to remain, but refused. Before he departed, he was anointed king with the name David. The sons of some of Solomon's nobles and priests accompanied him on his return to Ethiopia. These carried with them the Ark which the priests' sons had stolen. Miracles marked their homeward way ; they are borne to the Red Sea on a chariot of the wind by the archangel Michael. Here it is that David first learns about the theft of the Ark. Solomon also has meanwhile discovered the theft and followed the culprits, but is unable to overtake them. The Ark

[1] Generally known as Menelik.

brings the travellers safely across the Red Sea, and they all reach Ethiopia. An account of the last year of King Solomon and some other matters follow.

In the third part is told how Gregory again rises and enumerates the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.[1] Then he is asked for how long will the Chariot of the wind and the Ark of Zion abide with the Ethiopians, and the 'Subduer-of-enemies' (a bridle made out of the nails of the Cross) with the Romans. He answers that the Romans will depart from the true faith and lose the bridle, but that the Ethiopians will ever remain orthodox, and so lose neither of their treasures. The Ark will return to Zion only on the day the Lord returns to dwell there. The Chariot will however eventually vanish, and on this wise. Justinus, King of Rome, and Kâlêb, King of Ethiopia will unite and march on Jerusalem and annihilate the Jews. Each of them will leave behind there one of his sons as governor. Kâlêb's eldest son Israel will be so left, while his second son Gabra Masqal becomes King of Ethiopia. In the contest of the two brothers for the Ark, God will permit them to choose between it and the Chariot. Israel will choose the Chariot, will vanish with it, and become a heavenly king; Gabra Masqal will choose the Ark, and be king on his father's throne, greater than all the kings of the earth.

This summary clearly shows what the views of the Ethiopic Church were about history. No doubt they similarly regarded as history those other romances also

[1] The list of the prophecies is considered to be a later insertion.

which have been mentioned above in Chapter iii as having been translated into Geez, those, namely, of Barlaam and Josaphat, and of Alexander.

Lives of Saints which have been already published.

In the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalis, Series altera*—

17 SS. Yârêd and Panṭalêwon.
20 (i) SS. Baṣalota Mikâ'êl and Anorêwos (Honorius).
(ii) SS. Aron and Filpos.
21 (i) S. Ewoṣṭatêwos (Eustathius).
22 (i) S. Marqorêwos.
23 (i) SS. Ferê Mikâ'êl and Zar'a Abrehâm.
24 (i) S. Abakerazun.
(ii) S. Takla Ḥawaryât.
25 (i) S. Walatta Petros.
(ii) Miracles of Zar'a Buruk.
28 (i) Acts of the Martyrs.

In the *Patrologia Orientalis*—

4 (vi) Acts of Severus of Antioch.

By Pereira (at Lisbon)—

Vida do Abba Samuel, 1894.
Vida do Abba Daniel, 1897.
Historia dos Martyres de Nagran, 1899.
Martyrio de Santa Emerayes, 1902.
Martyrio do Abba Isaac de Tiphre, 1903.
Vida de S. Maria Egypcia, 1903.
Vida de S. Paulo de Thebas, 1903.

Various—

Histories of Takla Mâryâm (Mabâ Ṣeyon), and Gabra Krestos. Budge, 1898.
Acts of Takla Hâymânot. Conti Rossini. Rome, 1896.
Vie de S. Abba Johannes. Basset, Alger, 1884.
Vie de Lalibala, roi d'Ethiopie. Perruchon, Paris, 1892.

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY AND LAW

THERE is little in Ethiopic Literature that can be considered to come under the first of these two headings apart from the two '*Enquiries*' which have already been mentioned more than once. One book seems to make the claim, the so-called *M. Falâsfâ Ṭabibân*, that is, *The Book of the Wise Philosophers*. It, however, consists merely of a collection of aphorisms of various men reputed for wisdom in different ages and amongst divers nations. There are found in it extracts, short and long, from Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Diogenes amongst the Greeks, from Cicero and Gregory amongst the Romans, from David and Solomon amongst the biblical writers, and from Ḥaiqar and Chosroes amongst other Orientals. These names are given only as examples and are by no means exhaustive. The whole work has been edited by Cornill. Selections also of the Ethiopic text are given in Dillmann's *Chrestomathy*.

Of the names included in the above list that of Ḥaiqar deserves a notice. This is the Ethiopic form of Aḥiqar, the wise man whose story is found in many languages, to which there are said to be allusions even in *The Book of Tobit*. Into the story itself it is unnecessary to enter here, for it does not seem to be

extant in Ethiopic. Some of his wise sayings however are included in the *M. Falâsfâ Ṭabibân.* Fifteen of these are given by Cornill. As examples of their style the following may be cited :—

> My son, if thou hearest a discourse, hide it in thy heart and disclose it not to thy neighbour, that it become not to thee as a coal and burn thy tongue and bring derision upon thee and make thee hateful to God.
>
> My son, make fair thy discourse and thy behaviour ; for the wagging of a dog's tail gives him bread, but his jaw brings him stones.
>
> My son, if a house could be built by talk without action, an ass would build two houses in one day.
>
> My son, if a rich man eats a snake, they say of him, He seeks a medicine therein ; but if a poor man eats it, they say of him, It was from hunger.
>
> My son, if the course of water should turn backwards and if birds should fly without wings, and if a raven should become white as snow, then may a fool become wise.

Two writers, however, do deserve the name of philosophers. They come late in the history of the literature. These are Zar'a Yâ'qob and his pupil Walda Ḥeywat. The master was born in the year 1599, so both of their *Enquiries* belong to the seventeenth century. Of the life of the pupil we have practically no information, but Zar'a Yâ'qob gives us some autobiographical details both at the beginning and at the end of his treatise. He was the son of a peasant from near Axum. He tells us of his school days, and how from the first school where he had learnt the Psalms of David, he was sent by his father, at the master's advice, to a better one to learn the *zêmâ* or Church song. His 'voice was not good, and

his throat was rough, and he was a mockery and a laughing-stock to his companions.' So he left at the end of three months, and attached himself to another master. He spent ten years in all in study, and then returned and taught at his native Axum for four years.

> This time was an evil one, for in the nineteenth year of the reign of Susenyos came the *Abuna* Efons (i.e. Alphonso Mendez, the Jesuit) from the land of the Franks, and after two years there was great persecution in all the land of Ethiopia, for the king accepted the faith of the Franks, and therefore persecuted all those who would not receive that faith.

Zar'a Yâ'qob was no bigoted supporter of either school and so he

> was friendly with all men, both with the Franks and with the Egyptians. And when I taught and interpreted the Scriptures, I said, "Thus and thus say the Franks, and thus and thus say the Egyptians." I did not say, "This is good and that is evil," but I said, "All is good, if we are good".

It was to no purpose, for

> on account of this they all hated me; for to the Egyptians I seemed as a Frank, and to the Franks I seemed as an Egyptian.

He was therefore accused before the king, and fled away to the South by night. There in the land of Shoa he found a cave, where he remained hidden for two years until the death of the king. It was during this time that he pondered on the mysteries of life and evolved his teaching. On the death of Susenyos he left his hiding-place, and went again northward. He did not return to Axum, for he 'was not ignorant

of the wickedness of the priests.' He found a refuge at the house of a rich man named Habtu, and supported himself there by copying manuscripts and teaching his patron's sons. In this place he married and continued to live till the end of his life, refusing all invitations to return to Axum. Here too he wrote his *Enquiry* in his sixty-eighth year. He died at the age of ninety-three, according to a note which his pupil Walda Ḥeywat adds at the end of the book.

The *Enquiry* is throughout an appeal to reason. He is a master of the Scriptures and quotes them freely, but receives them only when they satisfy his conscience, or his understanding, as he calls it. He even works out for himself an *a priori* proof for the existence of God. He is quite impartial in his criticisms and his censure. Judaism, Christianity and Mahometanism all alike come under them when they teach things contrary to his understanding.

> 'And thus,' he says, 'if I enquire about other matters in the law of the *Orit* (i.e. the Octateuch), and in the law of the Christians, and in the law of Islam, I find much which is not agreeable to truth and the righteousness of our Creator which our understanding reveals to us. For the Creator has put the light of understanding in the heart of man that he may see good and evil, and may know what is lawful and what is unlawful, and may discern truth from error.'

The Jews teach that the natural functions of the body are unclean, but as these are natural, they are from the Creator, and therefore without impurity. The doctrine of Mahomet about polygamy cannot be from God, for the number of men and women is equal and this proves that monogamy was intended by the

Creator. Similarly, because nature teaches us that all men are equal as brothers, the teaching of Mahomet about slavery is erroneous. The Christians again are astray in their teaching about the excellence of the monastic life. All three alike are astray about fasting, for 'God created man with an equal desire of eating on all days and in all months.'

He has positive teaching as well. The future life is thus proved:

> In this world our desire is not fulfilled, but those who lack, seek; and those who have, desire to add to what they have; and even if a man acquired all that is in the world, yet would he not have enough, but would desire more. This disposition of nature teaches us that we are not created for this world alone.

He was a man of prayer, too, and a story which he tells of himself in this connexion is worth recording as showing the man's common sense.

> One day a messenger from the king came to me and said, The king says, Come quickly to me. Then was I sore afraid, but could not escape, for the king's men were guarding me. And I prayed the whole night with a sad heart, and I arose in the morning, and went to the king and entered. Now God had made the heart of the king gentle, and he received me kindly, and said unto me nought of what I had feared, but asked me many many questions touching learning and books, and said unto me, Since thou art a learned man, thou oughtest to love the Franks, for they have great learning. And I said unto him, Yea; for I was afraid, and the Franks in truth are learned. And then the king gave unto me five ounces of gold, and sent me away in peace. And when I came forth from before the king, I marvelled and gave thanks to God who had done good unto me. But another time when Walda Yohannes accused me, I fled, and did not

pray to God to save me as at the first, for it was possible for me to flee ; and a man ought to do all that is possible and not tempt God uselessly.

The *Enquiry* of Walda Ḥeywat the pupil is not nearly so original, but he works on his master's lines, and falls back fundamentally on reason and conscience. Near the beginning of his book he gives the following warning :

> And in like manner believe nothing that is written in books, until thou searchest into them and findest them true. For as for the books, it was men who wrote them, who may write lies. And if thou searchest into books, thou wilt quickly find a base wisdom that agreeth not with our understanding which God hath given us to seek withal.

And again :

> And lest I should err in my faith, I believe nothing but what God hath showed unto by the light of my understanding. And if any say unto me, If thou believest not, judgment from God will befall thee, I say unto them, God cannot bid me believe in lies, and He cannot judge me, if I reject a faith which doth not seem true unto me ; for He it is that hath given me the light of understanding that I may discern between good and evil, truth and lies.

Though we have in this second *Enquiry* no autobiographical details such as those which Zar'a Yâ'qob has given, Walda Ḥeywat occasionally varies his teaching, which is more ethical in tendency than his master's, with illustrative stories.

One or two instances of these may be of interest.

One of his own relatives married young and lived with his wife for ten years in peace. He then grew tired of her, got a divorce, and married again. With

the second wife he soon quarrelled, and wishing to divorce her also, she anticipated him, accused him falsely, he was put into prison, and lost all that he had. Two years after he married again. The third wife was passionate and garrulous. One day he was going to beat her, but she was too quick for him, and hurling a log of wood at him, knocked out his eye. In spite of the derision of his friends he still lived with her, and said to them, 'This trouble I have brought on myself. My first wife was a good woman, and I would not dwell with her in peace, so I married the second and she robbed me of my goods. The third has robbed me of my eye, and if I were to marry a fourth, she would kill me.'

The other follows in his own words:

> The wife of a certain man was a lazy and rough, so he came to hate her, and was unfaithful to her. Then she grew jealous, and arose and went to a magician, and said to him, My husband hateth me; and now make for me a charm that he may love me (again). And he said unto her, Yea; but go thou and pluck three hairs from a lion's forehead, and bring them to me, for they are needed for this charm. And she departed and pondered and said, 'How can I get near to a lion, and he eat me not?' So she took a lamb, and went into the country, and a lion came forth, and ran upon her to eat her, and she gave him the lamb and fled away, and the lion finding somewhat to eat, ceased to pursue her. And on the next day she did likewise, and many days also she persevered in this thing, for jealousy of her husband had seized her. And when the lion saw that this woman brought him food, he hated her not but loved her; and when she came with the lamb he received her with joy, wagging his tail, and caressed her like a dog and played with her. Then she plucked from his forehead the three hairs and brought them to the

magician, and said, Lo, I have brought thee what thou needest for the charm. And he said unto her, How wast thou able to pluck them? And she told him all that had happened. Then said he unto her, Go and do unto thy husband as thou didst unto the lion.

These two *Enquiries* have been edited by Littmann in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (*Series Prima, xxxi*).[1]

As the necessarily incomplete account that has here been given of these two works scarcely gives an idea of their originality, it may be well to add something as to the impression which the study of them made on their editor. Of the first of them he says, while bewailing the want of originality in Ethiopic Literature in general; 'A man like Zar'a Yâ'qob gave utterance at the time of the Thirty Years' war to thoughts which first became current in Europe at the time of Rationalism in literature.' Again, in words already referred to, he describes them both as 'two religious philosophical works which stand apart as the most original writings in Ethiopic Literature, and which are a real contribution to the history of human thought.'[2]

The *Fetha Nagast* or Laws of the Kings which I have left to the end might almost have been included in a previous chapter, for it is in large part nothing more or less than an ecclesiastical book. This will justify its place in a History of Ethiopic Christian Literature. Besides this, however, it touches on secular matters and deserves mention as the only book on Law current in Abyssinia.

[1] Littmann, p. 202. [2] pp 219–220.

Unlike the *Kebra Nagast* it is not of native origin, but is a translation made in the sixteenth century of the *Nomocanon* of Abū Ishāq ibn al 'Assāl, a work written in Egypt in the thirteenth century. The following account of the work has been abridged from that given by Dillmann in his Catalogue of the Ethiopic MSS. in the Bodleian Library. In the MS. which Dillmann is describing the work itself is preceded by a Preface which consists of two parts. In the first of these some account is given of the supposed origin, the use, arrangement, and authority of the book. The account of the origin, by whomsoever and whenever it was written, is not very intelligent, for it makes the Arabic author draw up the work at the request of Constantine! In the second part of the Preface the sources from which the book was compiled are enumerated. Apart from the books of the Bible are mentioned various Canons of the Apostles, the *Didascalia*, the Canons of different Councils,[1] the Canons of St. Hippolytus and St. Basil, and the Canons of the (Roman) Emperors. The book itself is divided into two parts, one treating of matters ecclesiastical and the other of things secular.

The first part consists of twenty-two chapters and these deal in succession with such subjects as the Church, the number of the Canonical Books, Baptism, Patriarchs, Bishops, Priests, Deacons and other orders of the clergy, the Liturgy, the Eucharist,

[1] Namely of Ancyra, Kertagena, Gangra, Antioch, Nicaea, Laodicaea, Sardica. If we compare this list of Councils with that in the *Sinodos* it would seem that by the Council of Kertagena is meant that of Neo-Cæsarea.

Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving, Martyrs, Confessors, etc.

The twenty-nine chapters of the second part are supposed to refer to things secular, yet so close was the connexion of Church and State in Abyssinia that some subjects, such as marriage, are here introduced which would seem more naturally to belong to the first part. Amongst the matters included which are really secular are the laws as to creditor and debtor, deposit, guardianship, sale, wills, succession to property, murder, punishments, etc.

The whole work, with an Italian translation, has been published in two large volumes by Guidi (Rome, 1897).

I have come to the end of my task of introducing (it is but an Introduction) the reader to the literature of the ancient Church of Abyssinia. It is in some respects a literature which cannot awaken any feelings of lively interest, for it is to a very great extent devoid of that quality of originality, which most of all inspires interest. The dreary monotony of its hagiology, exemplified best of all perhaps in the *Acts of the Apostles* which Dr. Budge has published, tends to excite weariness rather than interest; and the *Chronicles* of the Kings are, except here and there, concerned with events of merely local and transitory importance. Yet there is another side. The literature is of priceless value in having preserved for us books which, though known otherwise, are not extant in their entirety in any other language. A literature which contains the *Book of Enoch*, the *Book of Jubilees* and the *Ascension of Isaiah* can never be

negligible. For purposes of Biblical criticism too the Ethiopic version of the Old and New Testaments (including the Apocrypha) is already of use, and has been used; and its value in this respect will be increased whenever critical editions have been published. The student of Christian Liturgies also will find in the many Anaphoras of the Church material to help him in his studies. Something has been done to make these available, some yet await publication. The Ethiopic version of the *Didascalia* probably proves that it was not, as was generally thought, the compiler of the *Apostolic Constitutions* who wrote the greater part of Book VII of that work, but that he found his material already to hand for him in a lengthened form of a Greek *Didascalia*. These are all points which inspire interests of various kinds. Church History owes a debt to a work such as the *Chronicle* of Bishop John of Nikiou which gives a contemporary account of a period of which little is known from the Christian standpoint. Nor should I omit to emphasize once more the interest inspired by a study of the two *Enquiries* which have been the main subject of this concluding chapter, and which show that even in such an uncongenial soil freedom of thought could flourish, and that the consciences of some at least could shake themselves free from the chains of the bigotry and superstition and folly which were so rife around them.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF THE CHIEF KINGS OF ABYSSINIA

THESE dates are taken from Basset's *Études sur l'Histoire d'Éthiopie*. They are not in exact agreement with those given by Littmann, but there is in no case a difference of more than two years.

1268–1283	Yekuno Amlâk.
1283–1292	Salomon I.
1312–1342	'Amda Ṣeyon.
1380–1409	Dâwit (David) I.
1409–1412	Têwodros (Theodore) I.
1412–1427	Yesḥaq (Isaac).
1434–1468	Zar'a Yâ'qob.
1468–1478	Ba'eda Mâryâm.
1478–1495	Eskender (Alexander).
1495–1508	Nâ'od.
1508–1540	Lebna Dengel.
1540–1559	Galâudêwos (Claudius).
1563–1595	Sarṣa Dengel.
1595–1605	Yâ'qob.
1605–1632	Susenyos.
1632–1665	Fâsiladas (Basilides).
1665–1680	Yoḥannes (John) I.
1680–1706	Iyâsu (Joshua) I.
1706–1709	Têwoflos (Theophilus).
(1709–1784)	Yostos (Justus).
1714–1719	Dâwit II.
1721–1730	Bakâffâ, or Bakâfâ (Basset).

APPENDIX B

THE CONFESSION OF CLAUDIUS

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

This is the faith of my fathers, the Israelitish kings, and the faith of my flock, which is the fold of my kingdom.

We believe in One God and in His Holy Son Jesus Christ, His Word and His Power, His Counsel and His Wisdom, who was with Him before the world was created; and in the last days He came unto us, not laying aside (*lit.*, being bereft of) the throne of His Godhead, and was made man of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Virgin Mary; and He was baptized in the River Jordan in the thirtieth year; and He was perfect Man, and He was crucified on the wood of the Cross in the days of Pontius Pilate (*lit.* Pilate the man of Pontus), He suffered, died, and was buried, and rose again on the third day, and then on the fortieth day He ascended to heaven in glory and sat on the right hand of His Father; and He shall come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Life-giver, who hath proceeded from the Father; and we believe in one baptism for the remission of sins and we hope for the resurrection of the dead unto life that is to come for ever.

And we walk in the King's highroad (that is) plain (and) true, and turn not aside to the right hand or to the left from the doctrine of our Fathers, the Twelve Apostles, and of Paul, the spring of wisdom, and of the seventy-two disciples and of the 318 orthodox who were gathered together in Nicæa, and of the 150 in Constantinople and of the 200 in Ephesus.

Thus I proclaim and thus I teach, I, Claudius, King of Ethiopia, whose reigning name is Aṣnâf Sagad, the son of Wanâg Sagad, the son of Nâ'od.

And concerning the charge that we honour the first Sabbath (i.e. Saturday), we do not honour it as the Jews do who crucified Christ, saying, 'His Blood be on us and on our children'. For those Jews do not drink water nor light a fire, nor cook food, nor make bread, nor move from house to house; but we so honour it that we celebrate thereon the Eucharist, and have love-feasts, even as our Fathers the Apostles have taught us in the *Didascalia*. We do not honour it as (we honour) the Sabbath of the first day of the week, which is the new day, concerning which David saith, 'This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad and rejoice in it (*or*, we will be glad, etc.). For on it our Lord Jesus Christ rose again, and on it the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the upper-room of Zion, and on it He became incarnate in the womb of Saint Mary ever-Virgin, and on it He will come again to reward the righteous and to recompense sinners.'

And concerning circumcision, we are not circumcised as the Jews, because we know the words of Paul the spring of wisdom, who saith, 'Circumcision availeth

not, and uncircumcision availeth not, but rather a new creature, which is, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' And again he saith to the men of Corinth, 'He that hath received circumcision, let him not receive uncircumcision.' All the books of the doctrine of Paul are in our hands, and teach us concerning circumcision and uncircumcision. But the circumcision that is practised amongst us is according to the custom of the country, like the tattooing of the face in Ethiopia and Nubia and the piercing of the ear amongst the Indians. And what we do (we do) not in observance of the Law of Moses, but according to the custom of men.

And concerning the eating of swine's flesh we are not prohibited from it, as the Jews are, by observance of the Law. Him also who eats thereof we do not abhor, and him who eats not thereof we do not compel to eat, as our Father Paul wrote to the Church of Rome, saying, 'Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not; and, God receiveth all'. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, all is clean to the clean, but it is evil for a man to eat with offence. And Matthew the Evangelist saith, 'There is nothing that can defile the man except that which cometh forth from his mouth, but that which is in the belly goeth forth and is contained in the draught, and is cast out and poured forth; and (thus) He maketh all meats clean'.

And saying this He hath destroyed all the structure of the error of the Jews who are taught from the Book of the Law.

My faith is also the faith of my faithful priests who

teach by my command within my kingdom, and they depart not from the way of the Gospel, nor from the doctrine of our Father Paul, either to the right hand or to the left.

And in the *Book of History* it is written that Constantine the King gave order in his reign that all Jews that were baptized should eat swine's flesh on the Day of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Howbeit (with us) even as a man is minded in his heart, he abstaineth from eating animal food. There are some who delight in the flesh of fish, and there some who delight in the flesh of fowl, and there are some who abstain from eating the flesh of sheep and every man as it seemeth good unto him follows his own inclination. This is the good will and pleasure of men. And touching the eating of animal food there is no law or canon in the New Testament. All is clean to the clean. And Paul also saith, 'Let him that believeth eat all things'.

This is all that I desired to write, that thou mightest know the truth of my faith.

It was written in the 1555th year from the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, on the 23rd day of *sanê* in the country of Damot (Domot).

APPENDIX C

LIST OF SOME OTHER THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL WORKS

A LIST of some other theological and ecclesiastical books, most of which have as yet not been published.

1. *M. Berhân.*—This work is ascribed to King Zar'a Yâ'qob. It is written against the superstitious and immoral practices which were rife in his time, and contains also an indictment of some heresies and schisms which had arisen. The Stefanites, for example, refused to pay adoration to the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Cross, and the Eustathian monks would have no ordained priests. Other subjects which are discussed are: the two Sabbaths (Saturday and Sunday), feast-days, Church attendance, public worship, the Holy Communion, etc.

2. *M. Meṣṭir.*—This book contains, according to Ewald, a very minute refutation of all heresies, beginning with those which arose in the time of the Apostles. Then a list of twenty-seven others, which arose later, is given, commencing with Sabellius and going down to the time of Leo and the Council of Chalcedon. The work, he adds, is important not only as showing what was considered the true faith amongst the orthodox, but also as being about the best example of what the Ethiopic Church was able to produce of itself.

3. *The Apocalypse of Baruch.*—This is quite a different work from that which has been mentioned above (p. 46). It consists of two parts. In the first of these Baruch is led by the angel Suryal to visit the abodes of the damned and the blessed in the world below; in the second he is given various revelations, chiefly with respect to the future destinies of the Ethiopic Church.

4. *Retu'a Hâymânot or the Right Faith.*—A collection of various homilies for divers occasions on the Birth of Christ, His Baptism, various days in Lent, the Ascension, the Trinity, and the Four Beasts.

5. *The Book of the Pearl of Great Price.*—A doctrinal treatise which discusses the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, various events in our Lord's Life, the Descent into Hades, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Second Coming, the Holy Spirit, the Equality of the Holy Trinity.

6. *Homilies* of Severus, Bishop of Esmunayn on Christian doctrine: (1) on the Three Persons of God and their union, (2) on the Incarnation of the Son and His Crucifixion, (3) on passages of the Pentateuch and Joshua which demonstrate the Glory of the Christian faith, (4) on the Passover (the Lord's Supper), (5) on the warring of demons against the faithful and how they may be conquered, (6) on the glory of the First Day (Sunday), (7) on the Fast of Wednesday and Friday, (8) on fasting, (9) on the death which God conquered on the Cross, (10) on the stability of the orthodox Jacobite faith, (11) exposition of the Songs of Moses and Miriam and other songs, and (12) on the consolation of believers and their patience under affliction.

7. *Hâymânota Abau* (*Faith of the Fathers*).—This work is fully described by Dillmann in his Catalogue of the Ethiopic MSS. in the British Museum (No. xiv). It was, according to the Preface in the MS. translated from Coptic into Arabic, and afterwards from Arabic into Ethiopic. The work commences with extracts from the *Testament of Our Lord* and the *Didascalia*. These are followed by multitudinous extracts from different Fathers commencing with Hierotheus and continuing down to the eleventh century. The Fathers from whom the largest number of extracts on doctrinal points is taken are St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Cyril of Alexandria. The work ends with a series of anathemas against heresy taken from various sources.

8. *The Vision of the Virgin.*—This is an Apocalyptic work, similar to the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (No. 3) which relates a vision seen by the Virgin after her death. Accompanied by her Son she visits the abodes of the blessed and the damned, and learns their rewards and punishments. She tells the vision to John who writes the story. The work was originally written in Greek and was translated into Ethiopic from Arabic. The Ethiopic text has been edited by Chaine in the *Corpus Script. Christ. Orientalium* (series I, vii).

9. *The Book of the Birth of Mary.*—This is an Ethiopic version of the work known as the *Protevangelium Iacobi*. It is extant in Greek, Latin, Syriac and Arabic. The last-named version has not been published. The Ethiopic text has been edited by Chaine in the same volume as No. 8.

10. *The Book of the Passing of Mary*.—This work is similar to the two last named. It is extant in Greek, Syriac and Arabic and has been edited in all these languages. The Ethiopic text was first published by Chaine along with that of the two last-named works.

There exist also in manuscript two of the treatises of St. Epiphanius, the *Ancoratus* and the *Hexaemeron* (*Aksimaros*). The writings of Mar Isaac of Nineveh seem to have been particularly favoured, for they are found in many MSS.