

Boyd (1814), J. Brownlie (1913), F. Corsaro (Italian, 1955), P. Gallay (French, 1941), J. H. Newman (1896), M. Pellegrino (Italian, 1939). True, there are several recent books on Saint Gregory of Nazianzus besides those enlisted on Dr. McGuckin's bibliography, for instance the ones by D. F. Winslow, *The Dynamics of Salvation* (Cambridge, MA. 1979), and R. R. Ruether, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (Oxford 1969), which are not included in the bibliography of Dr. McGuckin. However, scholars and even the specialists consistently refrained from translating Gregory's poetry because his poetic Greek is frequently cast in Homeric style and is particularly difficult, often deliberately obscure, suggestive, ironic, and too complicated to be rendered into English verse that could claim poetic merit of its own (as Newman did for only a very few of the poems).

This selection of only twenty poems, from over four hundred that St. Gregory the Theologian composed, is nevertheless one of the largest English editions. It was a personal choice designed to represent some of Gregory's more overtly Christological writing by a few of the dogmatic poems, and some of his smaller, more intimate meditations, especially his prayers, doxologies and laments. In these Gregory chooses to meet Arian and Apollinarian heretics on their own ground and demonstrates that Christians are as cultured as the pagans. "Like a window momentarily opened on a lost and distant world: such are the joys of reading Gregory's poetry", says Dr. McGuckin so insightfully.

This charming and delightful selection offers besides helpful comments and notes, a select bibliography, also a long and useful Introduction describing Gregory's life, the historical context of the theological controversies of the period, and the significance of the points of doctrine expressed in these poems.

The reviewer cordially congratulates the author and wishes him all the strength and patience in translating many more precious poems from the Πνευματικὴν Gregorian pen!

Kingston, New York

CONSTANTINE N. TSIRPANLIS

*Justinian's Institutes*, translated with an intr. by Peter Birks and Grant McLeod (with the Latin text of Paul Krueger), Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 160.

The *Institutes* (or "Basic Principles of Law") of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great has been the primary vehicle of the Roman learning since the sixth century. "It is an elementary book. It is much the smallest work in the surviving body of Roman law. But it is the key or map to the whole. It has some claim to be the most important law book ever written" (p. 7).

The *Institutes* was composed in Constantinople and published in AD 533. Rightly the translators state in their introduction that, the knowledge included in the *Institutes* of Justinian "is a corner-stone of European civilization" (p. 28).

This publication meets a terrible need of a bilingual edition, since there is no other Latin - English edition of the *Institutes* currently available. The parallel version by the late Professor J. A. C. Thomas (*The Institutes of Justinian: Text, Translation and Commentary*, Cape Town 1975) went quickly out of print. Moreover, a special credit must be given to the translators of this work because they provided an excellent, accurate and completely modern

translation, eminently readable with neither Latin nor Latinate terms retained. It is a shame that old-fashioned translations (i.e. Prof. Thomas) should represent the subject as remote from the law of today.

A substantial introduction illuminates the historical and generic contexts of the *Institutes*, and traces its profound influence on European legal systems. Another plus of this publication is its useful glossary and index which allows the reader to look up Latin or English terms. The Latin terms are cross-referred to the English, and the principal texts are then given under the latter.

Unfortunately, a commentary is totally missing in this book, but it is promised as a separate (forthcoming) publication by P. Birks (p. 29). *Justinian's Institutes* will be a valuable resource for legal historians and students of Byzantine and legal history as well, as for scholars and students of the classics.

Kingston, New York

CONSTANTINE N. TSIRPANLIS

Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*, Wilmington, DE, Michael Glazier Inc., 1987, pp. 342.

This book is perhaps the best short introduction (in English) to the historical background and theological problematics of each of the seven Ecumenical Councils so far.

The material of the book is systematically and comprehensively arranged into seven long chapters, one chapter being devoted to each Council with helpful chronologies of persons and events and select bibliography (mostly annotated, but somewhat uncritically) for further reading, at the end of each chapter. An introductory chapter provides a brief survey of the Roman political and cultural world in which the Christian Church was born.

Certainly, Fr. Davis succeeds in stressing the ecumenical dimension of the ancient, first seven Councils of the Church, to the extent of seriously warning his fellow Roman Catholics as follows: "Perhaps in the interests of better relations with the Orthodox and Protestants, the time has come to reconsider the whole question and accept with them *only* (reviewer's emphasis) the first seven great councils as the truly ecumenical pillars of the faith" (p. 325).

However, some denominational bias is demonstrated in the author's effort "to indicate the growing authority of the Papacy within the developing structure of the Church and the difficulties that the East had with the Bishop of Rome's understanding of his authority" (pp. 10, 128). Thus, he misunderstands and does promulgate the "Petrine doctrine" of Papal primacy (pp. 128, 129). Hence he tends to disregard the "ecumenical validity" of Constantinople I (381), (pp. 121-124), as well as to underestimate Justinian's contribution to the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553) (pp. 240, 248-9).

Furthermore, Fr. Davis seems to overestimate Pope Honorius' "Monothelitic" Christology at the expense of Sophronius of Jerusalem. Hence, the author entirely ignores and systematically avoids any discussion of Honorius' condemnation by the Sixth Ecumenical Council as "Monothelite heretic" (pp. 265-268), and his bibliography on this Council is wanting. Strangely, any treatment of the Quinisext or Council in Trullo (691/2), as well as of the Photian or possibly the Eighth Ecumenical Council (879), is totally missing in this book.