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THE THE EIGHTH MONTH

Miyazia 10

(April 18)

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**IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,
ONE GOD. AMEN.**

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On this day died the holy father and fighter Abba Isaac, the disciple of the great father Abba ‘Eblo. This holy man renounced the world and all the pleasure and delight thereof, and went up to the desert of Scete, and became a monk; he was the disciple of Abba ‘Eblo, and he continued to minister unto him for five and twenty years. And he fought so strenuous a fight that at length his whole body dried up, but he retained possession of all his faculties. And he remained quiet (or, silent) at the times of prayer and the consecration of the Offering, and he stood timidly [in the church] with his hands clasped behind him, and his head bent; and he wept until the Office of the Offering was ended. And when he came out from the Offering, he never associated with any man at all during that day, and he never left the door of his house open lest any man should come and visit him. And when anyone asked him, saying, “Why dost thou never talk with him who wisheth to talk with thee at the time of prayer, and at the time of the Offering?” he answered and said unto him, “There is a time for everything, as is fitting.” And when the time of his death drew nigh the company of the monks gathered together to him so that they might be blessed by him, and might take refuge in his prayer. And when they asked him, and said unto him, “Why didst thou flee from men?” he answered and said, “I was not fleeing from men but from Satan. If a man taketh hold of lighted lamp, and standeth in the wind, will not the light be extinguished? Even so is it with us when our hearts shine at the time of prayer and at the time of the Offering. When we meet together and hold converse with each other our hearts become dark.” And this holy man having finished his spiritual strife and pleased God by his strife, and God having willed to give him rest from the toil of this fleeting world, he became a little sick and died in peace. Salutation to Isaac who loved ascetic labors and prayer, and fled from the face of a man, as from a wild beast.

And on this day also died the holy father Abba Gabriel, the seventieth Archbishop of the city of Alexandria, who was named the “son of Taroyka.” This holy man was a son of one of the rich nobles of Mesr (Cairo), and he was appointed deacon in the church of Saint Mercurius of Egypt. He was a wise and learned writer, and he wrote many books in Coptic and Arabic with his own hand, and he completed the greater part of them, and he interpreted (or, translated) many others; and the bishops, and those who were in authority, and the elders of the people chose him to be appointed archbishop. And there was in the desert of Scete a certain elder, a Syrian, and a man of the Spirit, whose name was Abba Yosef, and the grace of God was upon him, and he could see by the Holy Spirit, and describe what was about to take place before it happened. And the aged monks gathered together to him, and asked him to make them to know, and reveal to them the answer to their enquiry, “Who is the best man for this honorable office?” And Yosef answered and said unto them, “A certain man who is called Gabriel, the son of Taroyka”; and the monks told this answer to the bishops. And they all were pleased with it, and they agreed about him, and they seized him and enthroned him archbishop on the 21st day of the month of Yekatit, in the year of mercy, the eight hundred and fortieth year [of the Era] of the martyrs (i.e. A.D. 1124). And when he departed to the desert of Scete, he added in the prayer of the Creed, which is at the end of the Liturgy of Basil, the words, “and was One with His Godhead.” And the monks of the desert of Scete said unto him, “This is not our custom.” They were afraid that he thought that Christ was . . . and that His Godhead was mingled with His manhood. And after a great searching out, these words were sanctioned, and what followeth: “without separation, and without mixture, and without blending”; and they were well received and are in the Creed to this day. And this father in his days ordained very many good things, and he cursed the people who brought the bodies of the dead into the inner parts of the churches of Mesr (Cairo), and he cursed all those who had concubines and cast them forth from their houses, and drove them away. And this father drew up a Canon, and laid down just laws concerning inheritances from dead men, and

other matters, and these ordinances are observed by the Church from many books. During the days of his rule he appointed three and fifty bishops, and many priests, and he never took a dirham from them. And at that time the King of Egypt brought tribulation upon him, and demanded money from him by force, and he set seventy spies over him to watch him. And the scribes, and the men in authority, and the people, knowing that this father had neither taken any money from any man, nor from the moneys of the Church, nor from the [rents of] the lands of the poor, they collected from their own houses three hundred dinars in gold and gave them to the king on his behalf. And as the time of his death drew nigh, and God willed to make manifest his righteousness and virtues, he became a little sick. And he saw in a vision many priests and monks coming to him, carrying in their hands crosses, and censers, and Books of the Gospel, and they embraced him, and said unto him, "We have come unto thee to visit thee, but we will return unto thee after this earth is ended [for thee], and we will take thee with us." When he awoke he told the bishops and the priests who were about him what he had seen, and then he recovered from his illness. And after the end of a year he became a little sick, and again he saw the priests and the monks who had come to him formerly, and they embraced him and he rejoiced with them. And straightway he delivered his soul into the hand of God, and he died in peace; and all the days of his sitting upon the throne of Mark the evangelist were fourteen years. And in the days of this father the King of Ethiopia commanded Abba Michael, saying, "Set a bishop over the country of Ethiopia"; and the bishop said unto the king, "I cannot appoint another bishop without the command of the archbishop." And the King of Ethiopia sent a letter to this father Abba Gabriel the archbishop, asking him concerning this matter, and he also sent a letter to the King of Egypt asking him to command this father [to appoint a bishop]. And this father commanded Abba Michael, Bishop of Ethiopia, to appoint for him other bishops over and above those, which had been already appointed. And the King of Mesr (Cairo) commanded this father Abba Gabriel to command Abba Michael, Bishop of Ethiopia, to do everything that the King of Ethiopia wished. And the nobles came in to the King of Mesr (Cairo), and they said unto him, "If bishops become many in the country of Ethiopia they will wax bold, and they will appoint bishops as they please, and they will never return to thee at all." When the King of Mesr (Cairo) heard this, he commanded this father archbishop, Abba Gabriel, saying, "Send a letter and curse the King of Ethiopia, so that henceforward he may not appoint bishops over the country of Ethiopia"; and the archbishop sent a letter as the King of Egypt commanded him. When that letter reached the King of Ethiopia, suddenly his palace caught fire, and famine and plague broke out in his land, and the rain was held back, and would not fall on the fields, and great tribulation came upon the people, for the king refused [to obey]; and he transgressed the command of God. Then the King of Ethiopia turned to God and repented, and he sent a letter to the King of Mesr (Cairo) asking him to command this father to send, and release him from this ban. And this father wrote a letter of blessing, and sent it to the King of Ethiopia, and to all the Ethiopians, and blessed them. When that letter reached the country of Ethiopia God removed His anger from them and sent to them His compassion and mercy; and the rain descended upon them, and God removed the famine and the plague and the people rejoiced with great joy. And this is what happened in the days of that king. Salutation to the Patriarch, the son of Torayk, to whose name was added that of the angel Gabriel.

Glory be to God Who is glorified in His Saints. Amen.