

text distorts the truth that is sought, like a scratched and dirty window. Those who treat the biblical text as oracular are sneered at.

O'Keefe and Reno also came to realize that the approach of the ancient Christian Fathers was vastly different. The Fathers spent most of their effort writing about Scripture, yet the long exegetical passages in Athanasius' three *Orations Against the Arians*, for example, or in Augustine's *On the Trinity* are usually ignored, and patristic commentaries receive little attention—even though the common denominator of all patristic literature is biblical citation, paraphrase, and exegesis.

O'Keefe and Reno set out to explain patristic exegesis and to show its strengths and beauty. Such exegesis is not just an outdated curiosity (although the Pontifical Biblical Commission, in 1993, called patristic allegorical interpretation an embarrassment). For the Fathers, the problem was the one and the many. The one is Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the law and the prophets; the many are the countless words, statements, and narratives in the Bible. The method of patristic exegesis is to assemble these countless details into a single picture. To attain this coherent reading of Scripture, the Fathers developed many strategies. O'Keefe and Reno devote their main attention to three in particular: intensive reading, typology, and allegory. They remind us that typology and allegory are, far from being useless relics, strategies still commonly employed, even in television shows and rock music. They end with a consideration of the rule of faith and of the holy life.

Sanctified Vision is both a travel narrative—describing the authors' journey out of the desert of contemporary theological writing into the lush world of patristic commentary—and an evangelical work: The authors want to attract others to their project. Their book does not presuppose much knowledge of the Fathers,

and the texts the authors invoke to illustrate their points are fairly well known. *Sanctified Vision* will explain to a wide readership the principles of patristic exegesis. It will also waken admiration for the Fathers' unflagging fascination with every word of the Word of God.

—Joseph T. Lienhard, S.J.

**ALEXANDER THE CORRECTOR:
THE TORMENTED GENIUS
WHOSE CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE
UNWROTE THE BIBLE**

by JULIA KEAY

Overlook, 288 pages, \$23.95

When *Cruden's Concordance* was published in 1737 in London, it was immediately recognized as a revolutionary research tool: One man had undertaken this monumental task of indexing the entire Bible, and he had done it working for a dozen years, unassisted and uncompensated. That man, Alexander Cruden, was what we might today call focused and detail-oriented. We might also call him eccentric or obsessive. During his life, he was interred in madhouses four times, and his biographers have often presented him as mad: Who but a crazy person, after all, would index the Bible so minutely?

Julia Keay now presents the case for the defense: Alexander Cruden was not mad but the victim of cruel exploitation at the hands of enemies who found the madhouse the most secure place to keep him. *Alexander the Corrector* is a belligerently sympathetic treatment of Cruden. Keay provides a plausible reconstruction of the misadventures of this unusual man: Suffering from unrequited love and determined not to expose his beloved's scandalous secret, Cruden was confined in the Aberdeen Tolhouse for several months as a young man. Unable to be ordained, he worked as a proofreader until he became the romantic rival of a villain who paid to have him locked in a pri-

vate madhouse. After a shrewd midnight escape, Cruden unfortunately combined his quest for exoneration with a quixotic crusade to prove "the absolute necessity of regulating Private Madhouses in a more effectual manner." This set him at odds with an entrenched legal and medical system, and his inevitable defeats made him subject to depression, requiring further confinement in Bedlam. Finally, after another betrayal, Cruden decided to embrace his peculiar status and became a kind of public-morals superhero: Alexander the Corrector.

Keay writes deftly and accomplishes a number of impressive investigative stunts. She presents a generous dose of primary evidence, equipping the reader to develop an independent judgment about Cruden. The most compelling scenes are Cruden's attempts at self-defense. Eighteenth-century England was committed to keeping the peace by marginalizing anyone with "too much religion" as an enthusiast.

Cruden, who instinctively expressed himself in pious phraseology, could only confirm that judgment each time he spoke. When the mad-doctor Monro visited the madhouse and asked him his condition, Cruden replied that "he awaited God's time for his deliverance." Duly noting "enthusiast" on his chart, the doctor prescribed drugs, purging, and bleeding. Cruden was expressing his intent to submit to the powers that be, but the nominally Anglican doctor, tone-deaf to the voice of warm faith, supposed him to be calling for an angelic force to free him. Monro would later come into similar conflict with the "enthusiasts" of the Wesleyan revivals, just as the private madhouse system would eventually be reformed (too late for Cruden).

Keay herself is not always sufficiently perceptive about religious motivations, and she sometimes casts about for obtuse analogies to explain just why Cruden would think about the Bible so devoutly: "As the Quran

to Muslims, so the Bible to Calvinists." I cannot find in Keay a sympathetic familiarity with the passions and predilections of a concordance user, which would have equipped her to understand her beloved concordance maker even more.

Still, *Alexander the Corrector* is the best treatment this odd figure has ever received. While it is not quite a full biography, the book does cast its net wide enough from the theme of "tormented genius" to bring in many facts of Cruden's later life not widely known: how he indexed Milton's *Paradise Lost*; corrected Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; and undertook works of mercy, generosity, and advocacy with heroic stubbornness. The book says nothing, after the ill-conceived subtitle, about "unwriting the Bible." It says a great deal about the strange fruit borne by Alexander Cruden, a

devout scholarly servant of the word of God, "a mind in which reason tottered" but was not, if Julia Keay is even half right, "entirely dethroned."

— Fred Sanders

ACCOUNTS OF INNOCENCE: SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAUMA, AND THE SELF

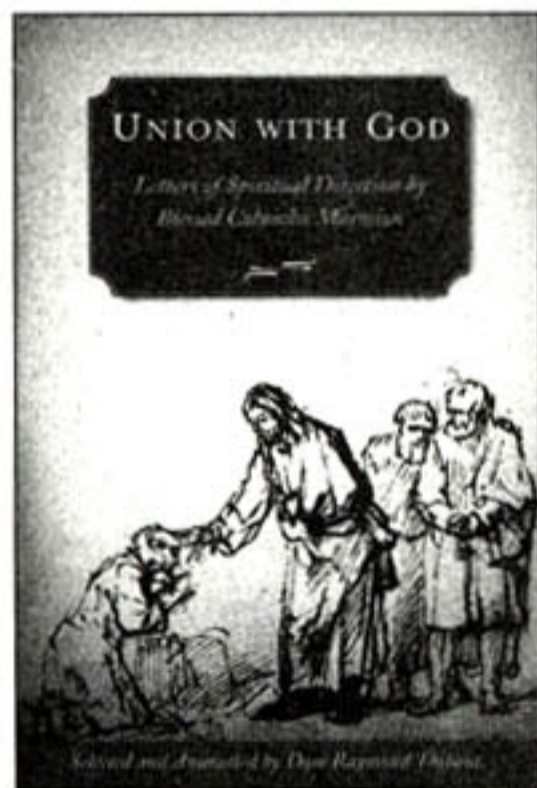
by JOSEPH E. DAVIS
University of Chicago Press,
 312 pages, \$27.50

"I was not sexually abused. Yet I was sexually abused," Ellen Bass wrote in an anthology of survivor accounts called *I Never Told Anyone*. "We were all sexually abused. The images and attitudes, the reality we breathe in like air, it reaches us all. We are all in need of healing."

Perhaps so. But in *Accounts of Innocence*, Joseph E. Davis points out

that the widespread application of the victimization model to our own experiences is a relatively recent phenomenon. On April 17, 1971, Florence Rush stood at a podium at Washington Irving High School in New York and shared her story of her sexual abuse, as part of the New York Radical Feminists' first conference on rape. According to Davis, before this conference, abuse survivors lacked a public forum through which to share their stories. The act of sharing stories broke "the conspiracy of silence" surrounding abuse, while each new story helped create a wider narrative through which survivors could frame their own experiences.

Davis expresses concern about the ways that survivors of abuse are now categorized as victims and then routinely trained to reframe their past in terms of the abuse they experienced,



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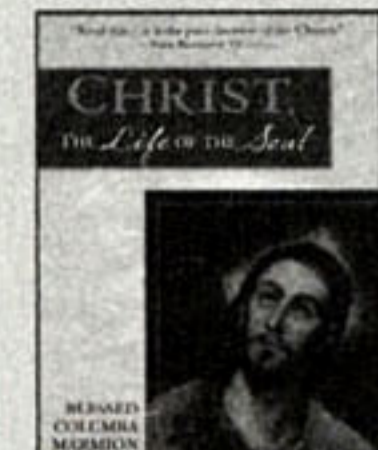
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