THE *PARADISE* OF THE HOLY FATHERS

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Palladius of Galatia
THE PARADISE OF THE HOLY FATHERS
Volume I

Athanasius of Alexandria
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Parts I and II

THE *PARADISE* OF THE HOLY FATHERS

PALLADIUS OF GALATIA

Translated from the Syriac by

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE

VOLUME II

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BOOK 1

And again, we begin, by the power of our Lord, the Third (sic) Part with the Counsels of the holy Old Men, and the Questions and the Answers [which they gave] to the Brethren

Chapter j. *Of Flight from Men, and of Silent Contemplation, and of Dwelling continually in the Cell, [a work] which was composed by Bishop Palladius for the Prefect Lausus*

When Abbâ Arsenius was in the palace, he prayed to God, and said, "O Lord, direct me how to live"; and a voice came to him, saying, "Arsenius, flee from men, and thou shalt live."

2. And when Arsenius was living the ascetic life in the monastery, he prayed to God the same prayer, and again he heard a voice saying unto him, "Arsenius, flee, keep silence, and lead a life of silent contemplation, for these are the fundamental causes which prevent a man from committing sin."

3. A certain man said that there were once three men who loved labours, and they were monks. The first one chose to go about and see where there was strife, which he turned into peace; the second chose to go about and visit the sick; but the third departed to the desert that he might dwell in quietness. Finally the first man, who had chosen to still the contentions of men, was unable to make every man to be at peace with his neighbour, and his spirit was sad; and he went to the man who had chosen to visit the sick, and he found him in affliction because he was not able to fulfil the law which he had laid down for himself. Then the two of them went to the monk in the desert, and seeing each other they rejoiced, and the two men related to the third the tribulations which had befallen them in the world, and entreated him to tell them how he had lived in the desert. And he was silent, but after a little he said unto them, "Come, let each of us go and fill a vessel of water"; and after they had filled the vessel, he said unto them, "Pour out some of the water into a basin, and look down to the bottom through it," and they did so. And he said unto them, "What do ye see?" and they said, "We see nothing." And after the water in the basin had ceased to move, he said to them a second time, "Look into the water," and they looked, and he said unto them, "What do ye see?" And they said unto him, "We see our own faces distinctly"; and he said unto them, "Thus is it with the man who dwelleth with men, for by reason of the disturbance caused by this affair of the world he cannot see his sins; but if he live in the peace and quietness of the desert he is able to see God clearly."

4. On one occasion Abbâ Ammon came during the season of winter to Abbâ Sisoes, and he saw that the old man was grieved because he had left the desert; and Abbâ Ammon said unto him, "Why art thou distressed, O father? For what wast thou able to do in the desert in thine old age?" And the old man Sisoes looked at him fiercely, and said, "What sayest thou to me, Ammon? Are not the mere thoughts of the freedom which is in the desert better for us [than living out of it]?"

5. There were two brethren in the desert who were the equals of each other in the spiritual life, and they led a life of ascetic self-denial, and performed the exalted works which belong to spiritual excellence. And it happened that one of them was called to be the head of a habitation of the brethren, but the other remained in the desert, where he became a man perfect in self-denial. And he was held by God to be worthy of the gift of healing those who were possessed of devils, and he knew beforehand the things which were about to happen, and he made whole the sick. Now when he who had become the head of a habitation of brethren (i.e., a coenobium, or monastery) heard these things, he decided in his mind that his fellow monk must have acquired these powers suddenly, and he lived a life of silence and ceased from converse with men for three weeks, and he made supplication unto God continually that He would shew him how the monk in the desert wrought these mighty works, while he had not received even one of the gifts which he had. And an angel appeared and said unto him, "He who dwelleth in the desert maketh supplication to God both by night and by day, and his pain and anxiety are for our Lord's sake; but thou hast care for many things, and thou hast converse with many, and the consolation and encouragement of the children of men must be sufficient for thee."

6. Abbâ Arsenius on one occasion went to the brethren in a certain place where there were some reeds growing, and the wind blew upon them, and they were shaken. And the old man said, "What is this rustling sound?" and they said unto him, "It is that caused by the reeds which are being shaken by the wind." And he said unto them, "Verily I say unto you, if the man who dwelleth in silence heareth but the twittering of a sparrow, he shall not be able to acquire that repose in his heart which he seeketh; how much less then can ye do so with all this rustling of the reeds about you?"

7. A certain brother came to Abbâ Arsenius, and said unto him, "My thoughts vex me, and say, 'Thou canst not fast; and thou art not able to labour, therefore visit the sick, which is a great commandment.'" Then Abbâ Arsenius, after the manner of one who was well acquainted with the war of devils, said unto him, "Eat, drink, and sleep, and toil

not, but on no account go out of thy cell"; for the old man knew that dwelling constantly in the cell induceth all the habits of the solitary life. And when the brother had done these things for three days he became weary of idleness, and finding a few palm leaves on the ground, he took them and began to split them up, and on the following day he dipped them in water and began to work (i.e., to weave baskets); and when he felt hungry he said, "I will finish one more small piece of work, and then I will eat." And when he was reading in the Book, he said, "I will sing a few Psalms and say a few prayers, and then I shall eat without any compunction." Thus little by little, by the agency of God, he advanced in the ascetic life until he reached the first rank, and received the power to resist the thoughts and to vanquish them.

8. When Abbâ Sisoes was dwelling in the mountain of Abbâ Anthony, the man who used to minister unto him departed and remained away for a period of ten months and did not come [back] to him, and he saw no man. And afterwards, as he was walking in the mountains, he saw a man hunting wild animals, and the old man said to him, "Whence comest thou? And how long hast thou been here?" And the man said unto him, "Father, I have been in this mountain eleven months, and I have seen no man except thyself." Then the old man having heard these things went into his cell, and smote upon his face, and said, "Behold, O Sisoes, well mayest thou think that thou hast done nothing, for thou hast not made thyself even like unto this man who is in the world, and is not a monk."

9. I once asked Abbâ Sarmâtâ a question, and said unto him, "What shall I do, O my father, for I do nothing which the monks do? On the contrary, I am negligent, and I eat, and drink, and sleep, and I think many filthy thoughts, and my mind is ever disturbed, and I depart from one work to another, and from one group of thoughts to another. What shall I do, then? For I am troubled, and my soul is little." And Abbâ Sarmâtâ said unto him: "Sit thou in thy cell, and whatsoever thou canst do, that do, and trouble not thyself. For I wish thee to do now a little, even as did Abbâ Anthony in the mountain, and I believe that by sitting in [thy] cell for the sake of the Name of God, thou also wilt be found in the same place as Abbâ Anthony."

10. On one occasion the brethren went up from Scete to go to Abbâ Anthony, and having embarked in a boat to journey to him, they found [there] a certain old man, who was also going to visit him, and they were not acquainted with him. And as they were sitting in the boat, they spake now and again a word of the Fathers, or a word from the Book, or they talked about the work of their hands; and the old man listened unto all they said, but held his peace. Then, having crossed the ferry, the

old man was found to be going also to Abbâ Anthony. And when they had all arrived at the place where he was, he said unto them, "Ye found excellent company in this old man"; and to the old man himself he said, "Thou didst find excellent brethren to travel with thee, O father." And the old man said, "They are excellent brethren, but they have no door to their house, and whosoever wisheth can go into the stable, and untie the ass, and go whithersoever he pleaseth on him." Now this he said because they uttered every word which came into their mouths.

11. A certain brother asked Abbâ Sisoes, saying, "Father, how was it that thou didst leave Scete where thou wast with Abbâ Macarius, and didst come here?" And the old man said unto him, "When Scete began to be filled [with monks] I heard that Abbâ Antonius had fallen asleep, and I came to the mountain here, and found that this place was quiet, and I lived here for a little time." The brother said unto him, "How long hast thou been here?" and the old man said, "Behold, I have been here seventy years this day."

12. They used to say concerning Abbâ Theodore and Abbâ Luk that they passed fifty years with disturbed minds, and were troubled the whole time about changing their place [of abode]; and they said, "Behold, we will change in the winter"; and when the winter arrived, they said, "We will change in the summer"; and thus they did unto the end of their lives.

13. A certain father came to Abbâ Arsenius, and he knocked at the door, and the old man opened unto him thinking that it was his servant [who had knocked]; and when he saw who it was, he cast himself upon his face, and the father entreated him, saying, "Stand up, O father, that I may give thee the salutation of peace." But Arsenius disputed with him, saying, "I will not stand up until thou hast departed"; and though he entreated him to do so often he would not stand up, and the father left him and departed.

14. Abbâ Battimion said, "When I went down to Scete they gave me some apples to take to the brethren, and when I had knocked at the door of Abbâ Abhîlâ, he said to me when he saw me, 'If these apples had been of gold I would not have wished thee to knock at my door; and moreover, do not knock at the door of any other brother'; so I returned and placed the apples in the church and departed."

15. They said concerning Abbâ Sisoes that when the church began [to fill] he fled quickly to his cell, and, [though] the brethren said, "He hath a devil," he was performing the work of God.

16. Abbâ Joseph said to Abbâ Nestîr, "What shall I do with my tongue, for I cannot conquer it?" Abbâ Nestîr said unto him, "If thou talkest wilt

thou have relief from this [trouble]?" And he said unto him, "Nay." The old man said unto him, "If then thou hast no relief when thou talkest, why dost thou talk?" Abbâ Joseph said unto him, "What shall I do? For I cannot stand against it." The old man said unto him, "Wilt thou have relief then?" and he said unto him, "Nay." The old man said unto him, "If thou canst not gain relief by talking, then hold thy peace."

17. A certain brother went to Abbâ Poemen on the second Sunday in the Fast of Forty Days and repeated unto him his thoughts, and sighing over what the old man had told him, he said unto him, "I had almost kept myself from coming here to-day"; and the old man said, "Why?" Then the brother said, "I said in my mind, Peradventure during the fast the door will be closed against thee"; and Abbâ Poemen said unto him, "We do not learn to shut a door made of wood, but to close the door of the tongue."

18. When a certain brother in Scete was going to the harvest, he went to Abbâ Moses, the Black, and said unto him, "Father, tell me what I shall do; shall I go to the harvest?" and Abbâ Moses said unto him, "If I tell thee, wilt thou be persuaded to do as I say?" And the brother said unto him, "Yea, I will hearken unto thee." The old man said unto him, "If thou wilt be persuaded by me, rise up, go, and release thyself from going to the harvest, and come unto me, and I will tell thee what thou shalt do." The brother therefore departed and obtained his release from his companions, as the old man had told him, and then he came to him. And the old man said unto him, "Go into thy cell and keep Pentecost, and thou shalt eat dry bread and salt once a day [only], and after thou hast done this I will tell thee something else to do later on"; and he went and did as the old man had told him, and then came to him again. Now when the old man saw that he was one who worked with his hands, he shewed him the proper way to live in his cell; and the brother went to his cell, and fell on his face upon the ground, and for three whole days and nights he wept before God. And after these things, when his thoughts were saying unto him, "Thou art now an exalted person, and thou hast become a great man," he used to contradict them, and set before his eyes his former shortcomings, [and say], "Thus were all thine offences." And again, when they used to say to him, "Thou hast performed many things negligently," he would say, "Nevertheless I do small services for God, and He sheweth His mercy upon me." And when by such means as these the spirits had been overcome, they appeared unto him in the form of corporeal creatures, and said unto him, "We have been vanquished by thee"; and he said unto them, "Why?" and they said unto him, "If we humble thee, we are raised up by thee to

an exalted position, and if we exalt thee we are accounted by thee for humility."

19. There was a certain brother in the monastery who worked hard, and the brethren who were in Scete heard about him, and came to see him, and they entered into the place where he used to work; and having received them, and saluted them, he turned round and began to work again. And when the brethren saw what he did, they said unto him, "John gave thee the garb of the monk, and made thee a dweller in a monastery, but he did not teach thee to receive a blessing (*literally*, prayer) from the brethren, or to give one, or to say to them, 'Pray ye,' or, 'Sit ye down.'" And John said unto them, "Nay, a sinner is not sufficient for these things."

20. Abbâ Anthony said, "As a fish when it is lifted up out of the water dieth, even so doth the monk who tarrieth outside his cell."

21. They tell the story of a certain brother who came to Scete to see Abbâ Arsenius, and who went into the church and entreated the clergy to take him to see him; and the clergy said unto him, "Refresh thyself a little, and thou shalt see him." And the brother said unto them, "I will eat nothing before I meet him and see him"; and when the clergy heard this they sent a brother with him to shew him Abbâ Arsenius, because his cell was some distance away. And when they had arrived there, they knocked at the door and went inside, and having saluted him, and prayed, they sat down and held their peace; and the brother who was from the church answered and said, "I will depart, pray ye for me." But when the other brother saw that he possessed not freedom of speech with the old man, he said unto the brother from the church, "I also will go with thee," and they departed together.

Then he entreated him, saying, "Take me also to Abbâ Moses who was a thief," and when they went to him, the old man received them with joy, and having refreshed them greatly he dismissed them in peace. And the brother who had brought the visitor to Abbâ Moses said unto him, "Behold, I brought thee to a man from a foreign land, and to an Egyptian, which of the two pleaseth thee?" And he answered and said unto him, "The Egyptian who hath just received me, and refreshed me." And when one of the old men heard what had happened, he prayed to God, and said, "O Lord, shew me this matter; one fleeth from the world for Thy Name's sake, and another receiveth and is gracious for Thy Name's sake." And behold, suddenly there appeared unto him on the river two great boats, and lo, Abbâ Arsenius and the Spirit of God were travelling in silence in the one, and Abbâ Moses and the angels of God were in the other, and they were feeding the monk with honey from the comb.

22. A certain brother asked Abbâ Poemen a question, saying, "If I see something done, dost thou wish me to tell it abroad?" The old man said unto him, "It is written, 'Whosoever shall declare a matter incorrectly, it is a disgrace to him and [a subject for] mockery.' And if thou art asked, speak; and if thou art not asked, hold thy peace."

23. On one occasion there was an assembly in a great church, and all the old men were asked in a body, "What striving is the mightiest against the monks?" And they all agreed that there was none stronger than that which would make a man leave his cell and depart, for when this striving is overcome, all the rest can quite easily be brought low.

24. They say concerning Abbâ Âpôs, who afterwards became Bishop of Oxyrhyncus, that when he was a monk he laboured with great toil in the ascetic life, and that he was moved every hour by Divine Grace, but that after he became Bishop, though he wished to perform the same labours, he was not able to do so. And he cast himself before God, and made supplication unto Him, saying, "Peradventure, O my Lord, it is because of the Bishopric that Thou hast removed Thy grace from me," and it was said unto him, "It is not so, but formerly thou wast in the desert, and there were no men there, and God took care of thee; here, however, thou art in a portion of the world which is inhabited, and men care for thee."

25. A certain brother from the Cells soaked some palm leaves in water, and then sat down to weave ropes, and his mind said unto him, "Go and visit such and such a brother"; and he pondered on the matter, and said, "I will go after a few days." And again his mind said unto him, "Supposing thou shouldst die, what wilt thou do? for thou wouldst not see thy brother"; and once again he satisfied his mind by saying, "I will go after such and such a time." Now when the summer had come, he said within himself, "To-day is not the right time for going," and again he said to his mind, "As soon as thou hast cut off the end of the palm leaves it will be time for thee to go"; and he said to himself, "I will finish these leaves, and then I will go." And once again his mind urged him and said, "The weather is beautiful to-day," and he rose up straightway and left the palm leaves soaking in the water, and he picked up a cloak and ran off on his way. Now he had as a neighbour a certain old man who used to see visions, and as soon as this man saw the brother running, he cried out, and said unto him, "Prisoner, prisoner, come hither"; and when he had gone in the old man said unto him, "Go back to thy cell," and the brother went back, and he related unto him the whole story of his war. And having entered his own cell, he offered up repentance unto God, and the devils cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Thou hast vanquished

us, thou hast vanquished us, O monk." Now he had a palm-leaf mat under him, and it was charred as if it had been burned in the fire, and the devils vanished like smoke; then straightway the brother perceived their wiles, and he gave thanks unto God.

26. Abbâ Poemen said: A certain brother asked Abbâ Sîmôn, and said, "If I go out from my cell, and I find a brother absorbed and immersed in matters unnecessary for salvation, shall I associate myself also with him? And supposing also that I should find him laughing, and that I also should laugh, when I have gone into my cell again shall I not be forgiven my relaxation?" And the old man said unto him, "What dost thou wish? Dost thou mean that having gone out of thy cell and having found a man who was laughing, and laughed with him, and having found a man who was talking, and talked with him, thou canst go back to thy cell and find thyself as thou wast before thou didst go out?" And the brother said unto him, "If not, how then?" Then the old man answered and said unto him, "It is right for thee to keep a careful watch both within and without."

27. An old man said, "One man is thought to be silent, and yet his heart judgeth and condemneth others, and the man who acteth thus speaketh continually; another man speaketh from morning till evening, and yet keepeth silence, that is to say, he speaketh nothing which is not helpful."

28. There were two excellent brethren in the Cells, and they were held to be worthy to see things of mystery, and each one of them saw the might which was sent down by God upon his brethren. Now it happened that one of them came on Friday to the coenobium, and as he was outside, he saw that some of the brethren were eating from the morning [upwards], and he said unto them, "Is it possible that ye eat at this time on Friday? And do ye usually hold a congregation at the turn of the day?" And as his brother looked upon him, he saw that the might of God was going away from him, and he was grieved, for he was accustomed to see it upon him. And when they had come to their own cell he said unto him, "What hast thou done, O my brother? Or what thoughts hast thou had? For I do not see upon thee as usual the might of God." And the brother made answer and said, "I know not; I do not feel that I have any filthy thoughts in me, and I do not perceive in my soul that any evil act hath been committed by me." His brother said unto him, "Peradventure some vain and empty word hath gone forth from thy mouth." Then that brother recalled the matter to his mind, and said, "Yea, yesterday I saw certain men outside the coenobium eating, and I said unto them, 'Do ye eat at this time on Friday?' This then is my sin. But I entreat thee to labour with me for two weeks, and thou and I will beg God to