

Instructing an angry monk at Tabennêse

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The text from which the following translation has been made is published in E. A. Wallis Budge *Coptic Apocrypha* (1913) pp.146-176 from an 11th cent. codex from the library of the Monastery of Mercurius at Edfu in Upper Egypt now known as B.M. Or. 7024, which also contains an encomium by John Chrysostom on John the Baptist. The manuscript is described by Budge on pp. l-liii.

In the matter of the division of the text, I have mostly used that of Budge. The numbers in brackets are the page nos. of the Coptic text. I have used the lower case for the pronoun referring to God except when it is necessary to remove pronoun ambiguity, not uncommon in Coptic texts. If the translation is occasionally 'free', I have added a literal version in the footnotes. There are one or two passages which I have been unable to understand, and these are indicated in the notes.

The text, according to the title, is a *καθήγησις*, which may represent an attempt to write *κατήχησις*. The person under instruction is a monk who has become angry with a fellow monk for reasons not stated in a community not far from Tabennêse, where Pachomius (292-348) set up his first monastery. He was taken to Tabennêse by the head of his community Ebônh to be instructed by Pachomius,

The present text may in fact be an expanded version of an earlier text of Pachomius, later modified by a different hand: sometimes the singular (**ΠΑΜΕΡΙΤ**), referring to the monk, and sometimes plural (**ΝΑΜΕΡΑΤΕ**), referring to an unspecified group, are used. The text seems to ramble somewhat, perhaps incorporating other texts, but this is only a superficial assessment, and I do not know enough to analyse it in any detail.

On p. 96 of the text there is a reference to inter- and possibly intra-monastic squabbling and 'gnostics': the community of Ebônh seems not to have had a rule, and it may have been the inability of his monks to live in harmony with each other that prompted Ebônh to ask the newcomer Pachomius to accept his establishment into the Pachomian *koinônia*; the turmoil generated by this squabbling seems to have been caused by the absence of 'prophets or gnostics', and I take the latter term to refer more to men of prudence than members of a sect.

(35) Instruction uttered by by our holy and perfectly reverent father Apa Pahomo,¹ the holy archimandrite, concerning a brother who became angry with another brother at the time of Apa Ebônh,² who had brought him to Tabennêse. He spoke these words to him, other fathers there rejoicing in divine peace. His holy blessings and the blessings of all the saints will come down upon us, and we will all be saved. Amen.

My son, listen and learn and adopt the true teaching. For there are two ways.³ Either you become competent and listen to God like Abraham when he left his land for exile, **(36)** living in a tent with Isaac in the promised land as a stranger. He listened humbly and was brought to his inheritance until he was tested about Isaac. The test made him stronger, because he offered his son as a sacrifice, and for this God called him 'companion'.⁴ Assume the humility of Jacob and his obedience and his endurance until he became light, seeing the Father of all and was called Israel.⁵ Assume the wisdom of Joseph and his obedience and struggle in self-restraint and servitude until you become a king. Emulate the life of the saints and practise their virtues. Be alert and not neglectful. Stimulate the one who dwells in you,⁶ to whom you have given a pledge. Arise and do not remain with the dead **(37)** so that Christ may shine on you and your grace increase the grace within you. For all the virtues will be revealed to you with patience. It was through patience that the saints obtained their promises. Patience is the glory of the saints.

Be patient that you may belong to the number of the saints. By believing you will obtain an imperishable crown. Thoughts: be thoughtful and patient until God gives you your rest. Fasting: persevere in it with resolve. Prayer: be ceaseless in your cell when you are alone with God.⁷ Harmony with your brother. Chastity in all your limbs. Chastity in your thoughts. Purity of body and purity **(38)** of mind. Neck bowed in submission and a humble mind. Gentleness at the time of anger. If you find a thought burdensome, do not be dispirited, but persevere in joy, with the following thought: 'I have been surrounded by them but I have driven them away in the name of God.'⁸ At that moment the help of God will come to you, and you will cast them out and you will be surrounded by joy and accompanied by the glory of God. Because joy accompanies the humble, and

1 The suffix -o means 'great', cf. W.E. Crum *Coptic Dictionary* (1939) 253a

2 Th. Lefort *S. Pachomii Vitae Bohairice* (1925) p. 52 records the incident in which Ebônh (described as **ⲓⲮⲧ ⲛⲉⲱⲟⲩⲧⲥ ⲭⲉ ⲩⲉⲛⲉⲥⲏⲧ** 'father of a monastery called Shenesêt') sent to Pachomius asking if his establishment could come under the authority of his community (**ⲉⲗⲟⲩⲥⲓⲁ ⲛⲧⲣⲟⲓⲛⲟⲛⲓⲁ**).

3 The earliest Christian reference to this concept seems to the Epistle of Barnabas §18

4 The 'special' relation between God and Abraham is first attested in Gen. ch. 18. Abraham is called 'his beloved' in 2 Chron. 20. 7

5 Gen. 32, 22

6 Lit. 'your citizen' (**ⲛⲉⲕⲣⲛ̅ⲛ̅ⲧⲙⲉ**)

7 Lit. 'between you and God'.

8 Ps. 118, 10

you will be satisfied to your soul's content. For the ways of God are humility of spirit and gentleness. For it is said: 'After whom shall I look if not the humble and the gentle.'⁹ If you walk in the ways of the Lord, he will watch over you and give you strength and will (39) fill you with knowledge and good sense and the memory of you will be before him at all times and he will save you from the devil and give you peace at the end.

My son, I instruct you to be vigilant and alert, knowing the things that await you. The spirit of weakness and that of faithlessness walk with each other. The spirit of lies and that of deceit walk with each other. The spirit of avarice and that of commerce and that of false oath and that of wickedness and malice walk with each other. The spirit of vanity and that of greed¹⁰ walk with each other. (40) The spirit of hostility and that of pain walk with each other. Woe to the wretched soul in which they take up residence and become master of it so that it becomes estranged from God because it is subject to their power. It sways from side to side until it reaches Tartarus of the Underworld.

My son, listen to me and do not be neglectful. Do not admit sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids that you may escape like a gazelle from hunters. For since youth I have been troubled by all the spirits, my son.¹¹ When I was in the desert, I was distressed by them so that my heart was in pain and I thought that I was not strong enough against the threats of the dragon. For he was harassing me on all sides. (41) If I came forward, he incited them against me to attack me. If I withdrew, I was oppressed by his bitterness. My heart was sorely grieved.¹² I turn this way and that constantly but found no relief. But if I turned to God in tears and humility, fasting and nights of vigil, the devil was enfeebled before my eyes together with all his spirits. I was filled with joy and instantly recognized the help of God, that with his tolerance he teaches the sons of man about his strength and Christhood.

My son. do not reproach anyone, for you might see someone praising him, from which you may conclude that he has achieved his rest. Keep yourself from this thought, for it is very wicked. God (42) hates the one who praises only himself and hates his brother. The one who says of himself: 'I am something' is deceiving himself. Who will be able to help anyone so self-important, who makes his heart like the heart of God. He who says: 'There is none like me' will now hear this reproach:

9 Ps. 72, 18

10 **ΜΗΤΙΛΑΒΟΙΑΖΤ** does not seem to be included in the variant forms cited on 136b. I have no way of checking the reading.

11 This personal reminiscence sounds realistic.

12 **ΝΤΟΟΙ** is probably a misprint for **ΝΤΟΟΤ**.

'You will go to Hell and be thrown among the dead. Decay will be spread beneath you and you will be covered by the worm.'¹³ But he who develops humility judges himself: 'My sins are greater than those of everyone' and judges no-one and rebukes no-one. Who are you to judge a servant who is not yours ? The one who has fallen can be picked up by his master.

(43) My son, be vigilant. Never rebuke anyone. Experience all the virtues and retain them. If you are a stranger, keep yourself to yourself and have no part in what they do. You are a poor man. Do no wrong lest you incur reproach, for poverty is bad in the mouth of the impious. Have you not heard: 'If you are hungry, you will grieve and you will say wicked things about the governor and the fathers.' Beware lest you fall into conflict over some material possession you lack and behave badly because of food. Be steadfast, for God has surely done his work quietly.

Remember Habbakoum in Judea and Daniel **(44)** in Chaldea. The distance between them amounts to 45 stations.¹⁴ When Daniel, in the pit, was food for the beasts, Habbakoum prepared a meal for him.¹⁵ Remember Elijah in the wilderness and the widow of Sarepta,¹⁶ who was burdened by famine and the distress of hunger was heavy on her, but never became weak though she was in such need. She struggled, was victorious and obtained the promises of God. Her house was plentiful during the famine. There is no virtue in giving bread at the time of abundance and it is not poverty to suffer distress through want. It is written of the saints that they suffered want, distress and pain, for they were proud of their distress.¹⁷ If you endure **(45)** in the struggle of the scriptures, you will not be enslaved, as it is written: 'Do not be deceived with food and drink or with part of a feast or new moons or sabbaths, which foreshadow things that are to happen.'¹⁸

Study at all times the words of God and be patient in distress and thankful in all things. Flee from the honour of men and love the one who upbraids you in the fear of God. May everone be of use to you that you may be of use to all and be persistent in your words and deeds. Do not go forward or backward lest God hate you. For your crown will be enduring. And, I urge you,¹⁹ listen to God that he may save you.

13 Is. 14, 11

14 I can find no reference to 45 stations. Even if a station represents a day's journey of 25 miles, it would still be some way short of the distance, let us say, between Jerusalem and Babylon.

15 Dan. 12, 33ff., where it is clear that Habbakuk made a stew but not for Daniel.

16 1 Kg. 17,9

17 Rom. 5, 3

18 Col. 2, 16

19 Lit. 'more and more'.

When you are among brothers, do not take pleasure in words of jest (46). Shedrach, Mesach and Abednego ignored the distractions offered by Nebuchadnezzar, and for this reason he was unable to induce them with music or delude them with delicacies. Thus, they were able to put out his flames of 49 cubits. They did not change for the changed one²⁰ but stood upright with the Upright One, God. For this reason He appointed them chiefs over their enemies. Daniel too refused to listen to the wicked reasoning of the Chaldeans, and made himself a chosen one. He was found to be vigilant and intelligent. He closed the mouths of the savage lions.

So, my son, if you hope in God, he will help you in your time of need. For it is necessary for those who approach (47) God to believe that he exists and they will receive the reward for the things they ask of him.²¹ These words are written for us this that we may believe in God and that we may struggle, from the smallest to the greatest, in fasting and prayer and the other duties until the spittle has gone from your mouth through fasting. God will not forget it but you will find all of this only in your hour of need. Humble yourself in all things. Remain unobtrusively silent, even if you know everything. Do not develop the habit of despising trials but bear each one joyfully. If you knew the glory that follows a trial, you would not pray for it be taken away, for it is better that you pray, cry and sigh until you are saved than to lose heart (48) and be taken prisoner.

What will you do in Babylon, man ? You will sin in a foreign land, for you have not been tested to take God to yourself in an upright way. Therefore, my brother, do not lose heart or be neglectful even for a moment, for your enemies are unremittingly vigilant, night and day, devising tricks against you. So, do not rush towards greatness lest you be humbled and your enemies rejoice over you. Rush towards humility, for the elevated will be humbled and the humble elevated. If you cannot do²² this alone, attach yourself to the one who carries out the gospel of Christ, and you will make progress with him: either you will listen or you will obey someone who does listen or you will be strong and be called Elijah. Or you (49) will listen to the strong and be called Elisha: when he listened to Elijah, his spirit more than redoubled. If you wish to live among men, be like Abraham and Lot, Moses and Samuel.

If you wish to live in the desert, like all the prophets before you, be like those who wandered in the deserts, valleys and caverns of the earth, oppressed, suffering and in pain. It is said that the shadow

20 ΜΠΟΥΠΩΦΟΝΕ ΜΠΕΤΠΟΟΝΕ. Does the latter perhaps refer to the animal-like posture to which Nebuchadnezzar was reduced, cf. Dan. 12, 33 ?

21 Heb. 9, 6

22 Repeats the Gk ΖΙΚΑΝΟΣ used at the beginning.

of those who are sealed²³ and the spirits of those wronged will bless yo. When the thief uttered a word on the cross, the Lord forgave him his sins and took him to paradise. How great is your honour if you are steadfast in trials, sexual temptation, arrogance or any other passion. In a word, struggle **(50)** against the passions of the devil not to follow him, and Jesus will grant you what he has promised. Be vigilant against forgetfulness, for it is the mother of all vices.²⁴

My son, flee from desire, for it darkens the mind and does not let it know the mystery of God.and estranges you from the tongue of the spirit and does not let you bear the cross of Christ or your heart inhale the blessings of God, Beware of the relaxing of the bowels that estranges you from the good things of paradise. Beware of the pollution that angers God and his saints.

My son, turn to God and love him. Flee from the enemy and hate him, and then you will receive the blessings of God and you will inherit **(51)** the blessings of Judah son of Jacob. 'Judah will bless you and your hands will be over your enemies and the sons of your father will serve you.'²⁵ Keep yourself from pride, for it is the beginning of all evil. The beginning of pride is the estrangement from God. It is followed by obduracy. If you keep yourself from these things, your spirit will find rest in heavenly Jerusalem. If the Lord loves you, he will glorify you. Be vigilant. Do not be haughty but remain humble that you may remain in the glory God has given you. Be vigilant and alert, for he who is found to be vigilant is blessed and will be installed over the **(52)** property of his Lord and enter the kingdom rejoicing and the companions of the bridegroom will love him when he has been found to have attended his vineyard.

My son, be patient in all things, for it is written: 'Make haste to establish yourself as a chosen worker of God who has suffered no shame.'²⁶ Approach God like the one who sows and reaps and you will gather in the good things of God to your storeroom. Do not beg like these hypocrites but discharge your inmost wishes and do the work of God, as you work at your own salvation. If you feel the desire of avarice and envy and hatred and the other passions, sober yourself and develop the heart of a lion. Become **(53)** strong and fight against them and crush them like Sion and Og²⁷ and all the Amorite kings and the Only-Begotten Son of the King Jesus will fight for you that you might

23 Perhaps **NET<T>OBBE** cf. Crum 398a.

24 Crum 829a: 'meaning unknown', but suggests that **oe** might be understood as 'other'. The context, however, requires what Budge suggests: 'vices'.

25 Gen. 49, 8

26 2 Tim 2, 15

27 Num. 21, 34

inherit the cities of the enemies. But stop being high-hearted and become strong-hearted.²⁸

See. When Jesse son of Nave became strong-hearted, God gave his enemies into his hand. If you are weak, you will become estranged from the law of God. Weakness will fill you with excuses for delay, faithlessness and neglect until you are defeated. Be strong of heart like the lion and call out for your part: 'Who will be able to separate us from the love of God?'²⁹ and say that what belongs to the outer man (54) may perish but what belongs to the inner man is renewed from day to day. When you are in the wilderness, fight with prayers and fasts and hunger. When you are among men, be as intelligent as the snake and pure as the dove. If anyone strikes you, bear it gladly³⁰ and hope in God that he will do you good. But do not forget the image of God,³¹ for it is He who said: 'Whoever glorifies me, I will glorify him. Whoever strikes me, I will strike him.'³² If you are honoured, do not rejoice. for it is written: 'Woe to all of you who rejoice.'

It also says: 'Blessed are you if are insulted and persecuted³³ and your name (55) is rejected as evil.' Look also at our fathers, Barnabas and Paul, when they were honoured, they tore their garments and grieved, rejecting the glory of man. Peter too with John: when they were beaten in the synagogue, they left rejoicing, because they had become worthy to be insulted for the holy name of the Lord, hoping for heavenly glory.

You, my son, flee from the comforts of the present world, for you will enjoy them in the world to come. Do not be neglectful day by day so that they come after you before you know and you arrive at the pitch of your distress³⁴ and these dreadful³⁵ faces surround you and seize you bitterly and take you to their places of darkness, full of (56) fear and anguish. Do not grieve if you are insulted, but grieve and sigh when you sin. This is truly contemptible: to walk in the blows of your sins. I most earnestly instruct you to reject vainglory. The weapon of the devil is vainglory, by which Eve was deceived. He told her to eat from the tree that she might see like the gods.³⁶ She heard, thinking it was the truth. and ran towards the glory of divinity, Her humanity was also taken away from her.

28 An attempt to reproduce the word-play of the Coptic: $\text{M}\bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\chi\text{A}\text{C}\text{I}\text{Z}\text{HT}$ 'high-heart'edness and $\chi\text{A}\rho\text{Z}\text{HT}$ 'strong of heart

29 Ro. 8, 35

30 $\epsilon\text{K}\rho\theta\theta\gamma\text{I}$ is a typographical error for $\epsilon\text{K}\rho\theta\theta\gamma\text{T}$.

31 Occurs several times. It is not uncommon in the Pauline epistles and may belong to another text that has been incorporated into this.

32 Ps. 50, 23

33 Matth. 5, 11

34 $\text{P}\text{Z}\omega\psi \bar{\text{N}}\text{T}\epsilon\text{K}\text{A}\text{N}\text{A}\Gamma\text{K}\text{H}$: Copto-Greek expression for emphasis.

35 Crum 552b

36 Gen. 3, 5. The plural 'gods' may be an allusion to the occasional use of Elohim as a plural. cf. Gen. 20, 13, where it is constructed with a plural verb: $\text{U}\text{L}\text{T}\bar{\text{N}}$

You too, if you pursue vanity, it will estrange you from the glory of God. Eve, on the other hand, scriptures had not been written for her to tell her of this war before the devil tested her. (57) For this reason the Word of God came and assumed a body through Mary the virgin that the family of Eve might be liberated. You, however, have been taught about this war by the saints before you in the holy scriptures. Therefore, my brother, do not say that you have not heard of it or have learned of it only two or three days before. For it is written that the voice came over the whole earth and their words reached the limits of the inhabited earth.³⁷

So now, if you are honoured, keep it to yourself³⁸ and glorify God. If you are insulted, glorify God and thank him that you have been made to share in his son and saints. If your Lord has been called a trickster and the prophets contemptible (58) and still others mad, how much more are we dust and ashes ! Do not grieve if you are insulted, for this is the path of your life. If it is your neglect that draws you, then weep and mourn, for those nursed in scarlet are now clothed in dung, because they neglected the law of God by following the desires of their own heart. Weep, my son, to God at all times, for it is written: 'He whom you have chosen and received to yourself is blessed. You have put thoughts in his heart about the valley of tears that you have created.'³⁹ Be simple like the lambs which are shorn and say nothing. Do not move from place to place, thinking that you will find God in this or that place (59). For God has said: 'I will fill the heaven and the earth. And if you cross the river, I am with you, and the waters will not engulf you.'⁴⁰

Be aware, my son, that God is within you so that you may remain in the law and commandments of God. Consider the thief on the cross, he went to paradise. Consider Judas among the apostles, he betrayed his Lord. Consider Hraab and her sexual profligacy,⁴¹ she was numbered among the saints. Consider Eve in paradise, she was deceived. Consider Job on the dung heap, he was compared with his Lord. Consider Adam too in paradise, he ignored the commandment. Consider the angels of heaven, they were cast into the abyss. Consider Elijah and Enoch, they were taken to the kingdom of heaven (60). So, in every place look for God and look for his face at all times. Look for him as Abraham did. when he obeyed him and offered his son as a sacrifice to God, who called him 'My companion'. Seek him like Joseph, he struggled against defilement until he vanquished his enemies. Seek him like Moses, he followed his Lord and the Lord made him a lawgiver and taught him about his likeness. Daniel sought him, and He taught him great mysteries and saved him from the mouth

37 Ps. 19, 4

38 **ΚΑΠΕΚΖΗΤ** **ἑ**ΜΟΚ, where the pronoun seems to be reflexive in a dative sense: 'keep your heart for yourself'.

39 Ps. 65, 4

40 Jer. 23, 24

41 Joshua 6, 17

of the lions. The three saints asked him, and they were brought out of the furnace. Job went to him, and He cured him of his plague. Susanna sought him, and He saved her from the wrongdoers. Judith sought him, and she found him in the tent of Holofernes. All these sought him, and he saved them, along with **(61)** others.

You, my son, how long will you be neglectful ? What is the limit⁴² of your neglect ? As last year is like this year. As yesterday is like today. How long will you be neglectful and make no progress ? Come to your senses and make your heart upright. For you will have to stand before the tribunal of God and give an account of what you have done secretly and openly. If you go to a place where there is conflict, it is God's conflict, and the spirit of God will stimulate you, saying: 'Do not rest in a place where there are snares and the devil whispers⁴³ to you: 'What happened to you the first time ?'⁴⁴ Whatever you see, do not be sad.' Do not listen to his deceitful speech, and God **(62)** will keep him from you, or you will be as weak and powerless as Samson. The foreigners will shackle you and take you to the place of grinding, where there is gnashing of teeth and you will become a laughing stock to them, that is, they will rejoice over you. You will know the way to the city and your eyes will be torn out because you have revealed your heart to Delilah, the devil, the one who has deceived you because you have abandoned the counsel of your heart. You have also seen what it would have done to someone as strong as David if he had not repented because of the wife of Uriah. It is also written: 'You have seen my wound. Be afraid.'⁴⁵ Look, you have been told that he did not spare the saints. Come to your senses that you may acknowledge your promises and flee from this arrogance and part from him, lest he tear out the eyes of your mind and render you blind that you may not recognize the way **(63)** to the city, your home.

And again. Know the city of Christ and glorify him because he died for you. Why then, if a brother says something against you, do you become angry and rage like a wild beast against him ? Do you not recall that Christ died for you ? So whenever the enemy, the devil, whispers to you, you bend your ear and he pours filth into it and you open your heart and swallow the poison that he pours into it. You wretch, this is when you should become like a wild beast or like a fire until you burn all his wickedness and burst your heart and spew out the evil of lawlessness so that the poison does not consume you and you die. Can you not tolerate a small word, man, spoken against you by your brother ? It is your enemy who seeks to devour your soul. And⁴⁶ what did you do ? You were angry

42 **παρ** 'foot', here metaphorically for 'the lowest part, limit', cf. Crum 302a.

43 In the final sura of the Koran (114) whispering (**وسواس**) is an activity of the devil.

44 I have translated this as though it was spoken by the devil. I do not understand it, or what follows it.

45 Ps. 119, 120

46 Loose understanding of **εἰς** (Crum 74a)

with (64) him. My beloved, do not. Do not let them lament for you, for instead of the adornment of a golden head, their head will be shaved for what they have done.⁴⁷ Come to your senses and tolerate with mildness one who insults you and be patient with your brother and do not fear the trials of the flesh.

My son, attend to the words of the wise Paul, spoken when he was in chains: ' There are chains and tribulation awaiting me in Jerusalem. But I do not value my life in any way that compares with completing my course.⁴⁸ I am ready to die in Jerusalem for the name of my Lord Christ.'⁴⁹ Neither pain nor temptation prevented the saints from going to the Lord. Be resolute and strong. Why be feeble with the devil ? Emulate the patience of the saints.

My son, why flee (65) from Adonai Lord Sabaoth and to the captivity of the Chaldeans ? Why are you so eager to eat with the demons ? Keep yourself from sexual profligacy. Do not destroy the limbs of Christ. Do not listen to the demons and do not make the limbs of Christ limbs of fornication. Think of the pain of punishment. Build the goodness of God before yourself and flee from all desire. Take off the old man and his works and put on the new one. Be mindful of the distress of leaving your body.

My son, go to God for he is the one who created you and suffered for your sake. For it is said: 'I gave my back to the whip and my cheeks to blows. (66) I did not turn my face from shame and spitting.⁵⁰ What is the way of Egypt to you, man, that you drink water from Gihon⁵¹ which is muddy ? What are these impure thoughts to you ? Stir⁵² them until you these tribulations befall⁵³ you. But turn and weep for your sins. For it is written: 'If you consider the sins in your soul will see a seed of long life.'⁵⁴ You have seen that transgression is wicked and how much pain and anguish is generated by sin.

Hasten from sin and at that moment recall death. For it is written that the mild man humbles sin and the ascetic face shines like the sun. Think of Moses: he chose to bear the tribulations of the people of God more than to take the enjoyment (67) of sin for a time. If you love the tribulation of the

47 I do not understand this. Perhaps **ΚΟΣΜΟΣ** means 'adornment'

48 Quotation not identifiable.

49 The foregoing seems to be a reference to Acts 20, 22 and 21, 13.

50 Is. 50, 6

51 One of the four rivers flowing from the Garden of Eden, f. Gen. 2,13.

52 **τρωζ** (Crum 453b) continues the image used twice in the previous sentence

53 Translates **τρωμντ** (Crum 416b), but I do not understand the meaning.

54 Quotation not identifiable. I do not know what **†ζα** means and cannot find the form **ΝΟΒΗ** in Crum.

saints, they will be your companions and intercede with God on your behalf, and he will give you every good request because you have borne your cross and followed your Lord. Do not run to a seat of human glory so that God may protect you from the storm of which you know nothing and install you in his heavenly city of Jerusalem. Test everything. Seize what is good. Do not despise the image of God. Keep also your youth so that you may keep your old age, lest you become ashamed and be attentive in the valley of Josaphat,⁵⁵ all creation seeing you and insulting you, saying: **(68)** 'We thought of you daily that you were a sheep, but we found that you are a wolf in this place. Go now to the abyss of hell and cast yourself into the heart of the earth. O such a great shame ! You go through the world, glorified as a chosen one. O the time when you came to the valley of Josaphat, the place of judgement, you were found naked, everyone looking at your sins and shame revealed to God and man.'

Woe to you in that moment ! Where will you turn your face ? Or will you open your mouth and say what sins of yours are sealed to your soul, which is as black as sackcloth ? What will you say then ? You will weep, but your tears will not be taken from you. You will beg, but your pleas will not be taken from you. For those to whom you have given yourself are merciless. Woe to the time **(69)** when you hear the voice of fear that judges: 'Let the sinners turn to hell.' And again: 'Depart from me, accursed one, to the eternal flames that were prepared for the devil and his angels.'⁵⁶ And again: 'Those who commit transgressions, I have hated them to clear from the city of the Lord all who commit sins.'⁵⁷

Now therefore my son, use this world with contempt, though you are in it, as no importance and follow the Lord in everything, for you will find freedom of speech in the valley of Josaphat. May you be regarded in this world as one of those who reject it.⁵⁸ But on the day of judgement you will be found robed in glory. Do not trust anyone for the comfort of your soul. But trust the Lord, and he will nourish you. Look at Elijah, **(70)** he trusted the Lord by the stream of Charath and was nourished by ravens. Avoid fornication. for it has slain many and laid them low. Do not keep the company of boys. Avoid women. Avoid the comfort of the body, for companionship burns like a fire.⁵⁹

Do not go into any part of the flesh, for if the stone strikes upon steel, the fire burns and consumes

55 Joel 3, 2ff.

56 Matth. 25, 41

57 Heb. 1, 9

58 **NETCTO** is probably a misprint for **NETTCTO**

59 I understand the Coptic word to include the concept of intimacy.

much fuel. Go the Lord at all times and remain under his protection. For he who dwells in the assistance of the Supreme will be protected by the God of heaven and will never move. Think of the Lord and let heavenly Jerusalem alight on your heart and you will be in the form of heaven and the glory of God will enfold you. Guard your heart and body most carefully. Pursue peace and (71) purity bound together and you will see God. Do not quarrel with anyone, for the one who does so is an enemy of God. He who is at peace⁶⁰ with his brother is at peace with God. For you know that there is nothing greater than peace so that people love each other. whether you are free of sin, your brother's enemy or a stranger to God. For it is written: 'Seek peace and purity, which are bound to each other' and 'If I have complete faith so as to move a mountain but no love, I will be of no value.'⁶¹ It is love that builds. What will purify pollution? If there is hatred in your heart and hostility, where is your purity? The Lord said through Jeremiah: 'He speaks with his neighbour in peaceful words. If hostility is in his heart, he speaks word of deceit to his neighbour. If there is hostility in his heart (72) or if he thinks hostile thoughts, is it likely that I will not be angry at this or at a foreign nation of this sort will my soul exact revenge?'⁶² As he says that he who is angry with his brother is the foreigner, because foreigners walk in the dark, never having known the light, so does he who hates his brother walk in the dark, without knowing God. For the hatred of enmity has sealed his eyes and he does not see the image of God. The Lord orders us to love our enemies and bless those who curse us, to do good to those who persecute us. So, what sort of danger awaits us if we hate our fellow-man who is yoked to us, the sons of God, the branches of the true vine, the sheep of the spiritual (73) fold, gathered in by the true shepherd, the Only-Begotten Son of God, who sacrificed himself for us, this danger of such magnitude because of which⁶³ the living Logos suffered? Do you really hate him?

Because of envy, vainglory, avarice or greatness, these things for which the enemy has bound you, he will make you a stranger to God. What excuse will you offer to Christ? For he will tell you: As long as you hate your brother, I am the one you will hate. You will go to eternal punishment, for you are your brother's enemy, while your brother will go to eternal life because he humbles himself to you for Jesus' sake. Let us search for the remedy for this evil before we die.

Beloved, let us turn to the gospel of the law of truth of God Christ, and we will (74) hear: 'Do not reproach lest you be reproached. Forgive that you be forgiven. If you do not forgive, you will not

60 Text appears to read **ΟΙΡΗΝΗ**, a form that occurs more than once in the text and is probably not an error.

61 1 Cor. 13, 2

62 Jer. 9, 5ff.

63 The 'danger' mentioned earlier.

be forgiven. If you quarrel with your brother, be prepared for punishment for your transgressions, infringement, sexual misconduct, lies, thefts, wicked thoughts, avarice, the things for which you will give an account at Christ's tribunal, watched by all creation, in the presence of the angels and the entire army, their swords drawn, pressing you to defend yourself and confess your sins, your garments filthy, your mouth closed, in distress, without a word to say, as you are about to give an account of so much.

Wretch, so many acts of fornication which eat at your soul⁶⁴(75), lecherous looks, wicked thoughts that distress the spirit and pain the soul as the mouth. The tongue that speaks great words, which defiles the whole body with frivolous amusement,⁶⁵ the gossip of hatred and envy, the jeering, derision about the image of God, the wilful contempt that will deprive you of the good things of paradise, the anger, discord, impropriety, arrogance, the thoughts prompted by wickedness and ambition. You will be questioned about them because you have quarrelled with your brother and were not deterred from violence by the love of (76) God.

Have you not heard that love covers a multitude of sins.⁶⁶ And this is what our father in heaven does to you: when you do not forgive each other truly, he will not forgive your sons. Look, you know that we have put on the good and loving Christ. Let us not take him off because of wicked things committed after promising purity to God. Prayer and fasting without end, bodily and spiritual purity. If we have promised God purity, let us not be caught in impurity, which has many forms. For it is said that impurity (77) has many forms. Brothers, may we not be found in this condition and be revealed as less than other men. For we have promised to be disciples of Christ. Let us toil, for it is toil that humbles defilement.

Now then, the struggle is before us. Let us not avoid it lest we become slaves of sin. We have been set up as beacons of the world. Let us not scandalize anyone. Let us wear silence. For many have found salvation in it. Wake up, brothers, Let us not take up a reckoning with each other lest they take up a reckoning with us in the hour of punishment, whether you are a virgin or an apotactic⁶⁷ or an anchorite. He will tell us: 'Hurry, bring what is mine together with the interest on it.' (78) He will

64 Crum 479a: ΟΥΑΜΟΟΜΕ 'gangrene, cancer'

65 Translates ΕΛΛΗΒ ΝΧΙΖΡΑΦ

66 1 Pet. 4, 8

67 It is clear from the name that these people renounced something, but it is not clear what or whether they formed a clearly identifiable group. There is evidence that the designation was not confined to men, but extended to women, who were able to deal on their own behalf in property and also received the title of 'monachos' cf. P. Oxy. 44, 3203 (c. 400 AD).

rebuke us and say: 'Where are the bridal garments ? The light of the lamps ? If you are my son, where is your fear of me ? If you have hated me in this world, remove yourself from me, for I do not know you. If you have hated your brother, you are a stranger to my kingdom. If you have quarrelled with your brother and have not forgiven him, your hands will be bound⁶⁸ behind you with your feet and you will be thrown into the outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. If you have struck your brother, you will be handed over to merciless angels to be flogged with whips of fire forever. You have not spared my image. You have insulted me. You have scorned me. You have shamed me. For this I will not spare you in your hour of need.

(79) You did not make peace with your brother in this world, so I will have no business with you on the great day of judgement. When you insulted the poor, I was the one you insulted. You attacked the poor and joined forces with the one who attacked me in my humiliation on the cross. Did I demand any from you when I was sojourning in the world. Did I not grant you my body and blood as food for life ? Did I not taste death for you to redeem you ? Did I not instruct you about the mystery of heaven and how I will make you my brother and companion ? Did I not give you power to crush the snakes and scorpions and all the power of the enemy ? Did I not give you many medicines of life that will keep you healthy. My powers and signs and miracles, which I bore in the world, the arms (80) of soldiering, I gave you to equip yourself with them and lay low Goliath, the devil. Now, why do you have to be stranger to me ?⁶⁹ Your neglect alone has cast you into the abyss of hell.'

Now, my son, this and more serious than this we will hear if we are neglectful them and do not listen to forgive⁷⁰ each other. Let us wake up and recognize the virtues of God that will help us on the day of our death, which guide us through the harsh and frightening war. First, we were given faith and knowledge to cast out faithlessness from us. Then, we were given wisdom to recognize the intentions of the devil (81) and flee from him and hate him. We have heard the preaching about fasting and prayer and continence, which are to give us peace and respite from bodily passions. We were given purity and watchfulness, because of which God will live in us. We were given patience and mildness. If we keep them, we will inherit the glory of God. We were given love and peace, powerful weapons in war. For no enemy is able to approach the place where they are. We were instructed about joy with which to fight against grief and told about charity and goodness.

68 There is a wordplay in Coptic that cannot be reproduced in English involving the verb **MOYF** (Crum 180a), which in the protasis means 'quarrel' and in the apodosis 'bind'.

69 The 'theme' of demand is expressed in this passage by the verb **ϣITC**.

70 One presumably has to understand something like 'the order'.

We were given holy prayer and endurance, which fill the soul with light. We were given modesty (82) and awareness, with which to crush evil. We have received the written rules of how to be non-judgemental⁷¹ in order to conquer deceit, the wickedness that is in man. If we do not judge, we will not be judged on the day of judgement. Ability to accept pain and violence was given to us so that sloth would not develop in us. Our fathers completed their lives in hunger and thirst and much tribulation to make themselves pure. In particular, they avoided the wine jar, which is very damaging and, in excess, the cause of disturbance, upheaval, inability to control limbs, a madness that is great in sin, headaches and decaying fruit.

Excessive indulgence makes the reasoning weak and the conscience (83) shameless and loosens the tongue. The enjoyment of everything is what grieves the Holy Spirit, so let us not become dazed with pleasure. The priest, it is said, and the prophet⁷² were confused about wine: 'Wine is loss of self-control. Drunkenness is an insult. Those who give themselves to these things will not be free from sin.'⁷³ Wine is good if you drink it in moderation. If you give your attention to phials and cups, you will become as naked as pestle.⁷⁴

Everyone who has trained to be a disciple of Jesus should abstain from wine and drunkenness. Our fathers knew the great damage caused by wine and avoided it. They drank a little only because of sickness. If a little was given to the great worker Timothy, who was very sick (84), then those who are brimming over with the evil that springs from youth, beset by much pollution and passion, what am I to say to them ? I am afraid to say: 'Do not let him drink at all lest he who hates his salvation grumble at me.' These words are hard for many to bear now.

But, my beloved, it is good to abstain and he who does so is of use, for he will guide the ship into the harbour in good and holy salvation and will be sated with the good things of heaven. Greater than all this: we were given humility, which watches over all the other virtues. This great and holy power that was entrusted to him by God when he came into the world was humility, the wall of virtues, the treasure, the weapon of salvation, the healer of every wound, when these fine linen cloths were made together with the gold work⁷⁵ for the tabernacle, and all these adornments. (85)

71 A circumlocution for **ΜΗΤΑΤΚΡΙΝΕ**

72 I am not sure of this translation because I do not understand the reference to 'priest' and 'prophet' in this context. One would normally expect the following quotation to be introduced by the conjunction **καί**.

73 Prov. 20, 1

74 Prov. 23, 31

75 Crum 81a: **εἰσπ-**

they covered themselves with sackcloth.⁷⁶

It is a small thing before man, but chosen and prized before God. If we generate it for ourselves, we will utterly crush the power of the enemy. For it said: 'On whom am I to look but the humble and the meek ? Let us not abandon our heart in the time of famine, for pride has increased together with wisdom. Greed has increased and fornication is dominant through indulging the flesh. Arrogance reigns supreme. The lowly have stopped obeying the great. The great have stopped caring for the lowly. Each one follows his own wishes. Now is the time for us to read the prophets: 'Woe to me, my soul, for the fearful has caused havoc on **(86)** earth and the upright among men according to Christ was no longer, that is, he ceased to exist, and each one oppressed his neighbour.'⁷⁷

My beloved, struggle, for the time has come and the days are few when a father teaches his children and a son obeys his father. Good virgins have died out. The holy fathers have gone to sleep everywhere. Mothers have been destroyed like widows. We have become like orphans. The humble have been crushed and the heads of the poor are beaten. So, it will not be long before the anger of God comes and we are in mourning, with no-one to comfort us. These things have happened to us because we have not exerted ourselves. **(87)** Let us struggle, my beloved, to receive the crown that is prepared. The throne is spread and the entrance to the kingdom open. I will give from the hidden manna to the victor.⁷⁸ If we struggle and conquer our passions, we will rule forever. If they conquer us, we will reflect and weep bitterly.

Let us struggle for ourselves as long as there is repentance for us. Let us bear the struggle that we may be renewed in purity. Let us be philanthropic that we may become companions of Jesus who loves man. If we have promised God to live as monks in love, it is not only virginity of the body but also virginity of rejecting sin. For virgins have been repelled in the gospel because of their sloth. Those whose vigilance is unwavering enter **(88)** the bridal chamber. May it be that everyone enters that place forever.

The avarice about which they quarrel with us, if you wish to acquire wealth that is bait for the hook of the angler⁷⁹ by avarice, commerce, violence, evil machination or excessive manual labour, you

76 One wonders if a contrast is being made here between the display of the material tabernacle in Judaism and the humility of Jesus the true tabernacle, cf. Matt. 27, 51, where the tabernacle curtain is ripped in two from top to bottom.

77 Micah 7, 2

78 Rev. 2, 17

79 The text is probably corrupt and the most likely word to be read in place of κωστ (fire) is ογωστ (Crum 509a).

will have no time to serve God. But if you wish at all costs to acquire wealth, remember what the gospel says about the careless whose soul is taken at night: 'The things you have prepared, for whom will they be?'⁸⁰ Similarly, 'he gathers not knowing for whom he gathers'.⁸¹

Struggle, my beloved, and combat the passions and say: 'I will do as Abraham did. I will stretch out my hands⁸² to the high God who created heaven and earth (89) and say if I take anything of yours, from a thread to a shoelace? A humble stranger is a great good and the Lord loves a proselyte so much that he gives him bread and clothing. Because of the weakness of heart, the cause of fighting against us, come together when it is necessary.⁸³ Remember it is written: 'Your storehouses will be cursed together with what is in them.' About gold and bronze, James said: 'Their rust will be a testimony to you and eat your flesh like fire.'⁸⁴ And again: 'A just man who has no idols because he sees their flaws is excellent.' Purify yourself from anathema before the Lord summons you. For you have put your hope (90) in God, because it is written: 'May your hearts be pure and perfect towards God.'

I ask you, my beloved in the Lord. For you have taken God to be your helper and you have become beloved of him. You have set your heart on walking in the commandments of God. God is the one who will bless you so that your spring will be a river and your river a sea. You are a chariot, a horseman of continence. The torch of God burns on your head, as you illuminate with the hidden light of the spirit, as you use your words judiciously. God will grant you the bravery of the saints, and no idols will be found in your city, and you will stand on the neck of the archons of darkness. You will see the commander-in-chief of the Lord's force standing at your right (91) hand and you will swallow Pharaoh and his army and you will cross the lake of the salt sea, your life. Amen.

Thereafter I order you not to relax your attention, for the demons are only too pleased that men should do this and ensnare him before they know it. Do not therefore neglect to learn the fear of the Lord and grow like the new plants and you will please God like a new calf pushing away the lamb with its horns. Be strong in word and deed. Do not turn away your face like a hypocrite, otherwise they . . .⁸⁵ your share⁸⁶ with them. Do not waste a single day of your life. Know what are to give to

80 Luke 12, 20

81 Ps. 39, 6

82 I have understood COOYTN as a transitive verb and added an object ('my hands') to the text.

83 A paraphrase.

84 James 5, 3

85 The text reads $\text{NCEK}\bar{\text{O}}$, but I cannot identify the verb. One might expect something like 'take away', and the only verb that occurs to me is $\text{C}\bar{\text{O}}\text{NTE}$ (Crum 825b)

86 Crum 396a

God each day. Sit to one side, like a wise governor and judge (92) sensibly, whether you are absent⁸⁷ or present.

But I judge you daily. For it is better that you are in the middle of a thousand in all humility than in the cave of a hyena behaving arrogantly. It has been testified about Lot when he was in Sodom that he was good and faithful. We have also heard about Cain that there was no man on earth with him, except for three other men, and he became bad.

Now then, the struggle is at hand. Test those who come to complete it every day: are you with us or with those who oppose us? Not only do the demons come to you on the right, but the left is clear to everyone.⁸⁸ For I myself can honestly say that I have been opposed by them on the right. They brought me the devil, shackled like a wild donkey.⁸⁹ But the Lord helped me and I did not believe (93) nor did I trust them. I was tested many times by machinations of the devil on the right. He came to me and again dared to test the Lord, but his schemes failed.

Now then, my son, put on the garb of humility, make the Lord and his good father your counsellors and become the companion of a man of God who has the law of God in his heart. Be like a poor man who takes up his cross, a companion of tears, and make yourself⁹⁰ poor with a face cloth on your head and your dwelling place become a grave until God resurrects you and gives you the diadem of victory.

If at any time you are annoyed with a brother who says something hurtful to you; or your heart is offended at a brother, and you think⁹¹ that he is not (94) worthy of these things; or if the enemy works in you against one. you think that he is not worthy of these honours, and you accept the word or a thought of the devil, the war of your reasoning will become great and you will quarrel with your brother, in the knowledge that there is no balm in Gilead and no doctor near you.⁹² Now, make your way to the peace and conscience of God and weep between yourself and Christ. The spirit of Jesus will speak to you in your reasoning and reprove⁹³ you about the commandment, for there is no need for you to struggle, like a wild beast, as if this poison were in you.

87 The term ἀναχωρεῖ means 'withdraw', and I take it to refer the governor who might retire to reach a verdict or make the pronouncement in public.

88 This seems to mean 'it goes without saying that they are on the left'.

89 See Budge p. 380 note 1

90 The word ζῶωκ could also be a verb (Crum 661b) 'gird', but it is normally used of armour.

91 I take this to be the sense of ἐκκω.

92 Jer. 8, 22.

93 Crum 126b quotes this passage and clearly understands χπιο and not χπο.

Remember that you have often profited. Have you not heard Christ telling us to forgive our brother seventy times seven ?⁹⁴ Do you not often weep when you pray for forgiveness ? (95) Yet you hold this trifle against your brother. The spirit of God will bring you to judgement and punishment. It is fitting to remember the saints, how they were worthy to be despised. Remember how Christ was despised and treated with contempt and crucified for you, and he will still fill your heart with mercy and fear and you will throw yourself on your face weeping, asking for forgiveness for having insulted an image of God. Then you will rise in the comfort of repentance and go to your brother, your heart relaxed, your face joyful, your mouth full of joy, enveloped in peace, smiling and asking him to forgive you for insulting him. Joy will result from the tears and peace rejoice in your midst. The spirit of God rejoices and calls out: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God.'⁹⁵

When the enemy hears the sound of the voice, he will feel shame and God will be glorified and we will receive a great blessing. Now then, my son, let us fight for ourselves, in the knowledge that a mist has settled everywhere and the churches are full of angry strife. The monastic communities are full of megalomania, arrogance is dominant, and there is internecine conflict. Each oppresses his neighbour. We have fallen in the midst of these troubles and there are no prophets or men of enlightenment.⁹⁶ No-one rebukes anyone for (97) anything, because they have become callous. The intelligent person remains silent, for it is an evil time. Everyone makes himself a king. They are distracted⁹⁷ by what is not fitting. Now then, my brother, make peace with your brother and both pray for me, for I am unable to do anything but am humbled because of my wishes. Be sober in all things. Work hard. Do as the evangelist did and endure temptation. Complete the struggle of monasticism humbly and mildly, trembling at the words you have heard and preserving your virginity, and withdraw to your standard of measure and these alien voices for my sake,⁹⁸ living within the writings of the saints and firm in the faith of Christ Jesus Our Lord, the one from whom and to whom is glory and to his Good Father and to the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

94 Matth. 18, 22

95 Matth. 5, 9

96 This translates ΓΝΩΣΤΙΚΟΣ in the sense outlined by G. W. Lampe *Patristic Greek Lexicon* (1961) p. 320.

97 And 'disregard' what is fitting, cf. Lampe *Lexicon* (1961) p.726

98 The preposition ΕΤΒΗΤ can also be understood as 'about me'. I do not understand either ΠΑΡΑΜΕΤΡΟΝ (which seems to be fem.) or ΝΕΙΣΜΗ ΝΩΨΜΟ

The following is a translation of the colophon: ⁹⁹

Through the zeal and solicitude of our God-loving brother Chael son of the blessed Stephen, the island farmer¹⁰⁰ of the plain north of Esna.¹⁰¹ He had this book made through his labours and donated it to the monastery of St Mercurius in the desert¹⁰² of the city of Edfu for the salvation of his soul that the monks might read in it the names of St John¹⁰³ and the holy Apa Pahomo and that St Mercurius the general and valiant martyr, St John the Baptist and Forerunner of Christ and St Pahomo the archimandrite might call upon Christ for his sake to bless him in this world and save him from all the snares of the devil and wicked men and to help him in every good work. After departing from this life, may he be worthy of the forgiveness of his sins and receive his inheritance with all the saints. May this happen. Amen.

Remember me, Theopistos the lowliest deacon, son of Severus the priest, the head priest of St Mercurius of Esna. I wrote this book with my hand. Pray for me that God might forgive all my sins, for they are very many. May this happen.

(Greek) Written on Mechir 17, Indiction 15. Year of Martyrs 701.¹⁰⁴ Year of the Saracens 375.

At the bottom of the page there is a fragmentary text that mentions a Nicodemus of Edfu, on whom cf. Lantschoot (fasc. 2 p. 41)

99 See also A. van Lantschoot *Receuil des colophons des manuscrits coptes* (1929) no. 111 (fasc. 1 p. 189ff.)

100 Islands in the river that provided enough space for cultivation or grazing.

101 **ⲧⲁⲒⲏⲧ ⲛⲧⲧⲠⲟⲗⲓⲥ** Lantschoot (fasc. 2 p. 78 note 2) understands this as 'belonging to the south of the city', which must be a misprint; on the meaning of **Ⲓⲏⲧ**, cf. Crum 717b. Edfu is about 50 south of Esna. The monastery was situated in the necropolis of Edfu about 4km SW of the town. It seems not improbable that it is situated under the monastery of Bakhûm, which was revitalized in the mid-70s.

102 The Coptic word **ⲧⲟⲟⲩ** is translated by Crum (440b) as 'mountain', but since the name of the area is Hagr (حجر) Edfu, it is more likely to be associated with 'rock'. A standard word for the desert in Egypt is **Ⲓⲏⲧ** (rock).

103 Chrysostom

104 10 Feb. 985 AD