



The Conferences of Desert Fathers

John Cassian

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THE obligation, which was promised to the blessed Pope Castor in the preface to those volumes which with God's help I composed in twelve books on the Institutes of the Coenobia, and the remedies for the eight principal faults, has now been, as far as my feeble ability permitted, satisfied. I should certainly like to see what was the opinion fairly arrived at on this work both by his judgment and yours, whether, on a matter so profound and so lofty, and one which has never yet been made the subject of a treatise, we have produced anything worthy of your notice, and of the eager desire of all the holy brethren. But now as the aforesaid Bishop has left us and departed to Christ, meanwhile these ten Conferences of the grandest of the fathers, viz., the Anchorites who dwelt in the desert of Scete, which he, fired with an incomparable desire for saintliness, had bidden me write for him in the same style (not considering the greatness of his affection, what a burden he placed on shoulders too weak to bear it)—these Conferences I have thought good to dedicate to you in particular, O blessed Pope, Leontius, and the holy brother Helladius.



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