The Nag Hammadi Library

The Definitive Translation
Of the Gnostic Scriptures
Complete in One Volume

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PREFACE

This volume is a thorough revision of The Nag Hammadi Library in English. The first edition, published in 1977, marked the end of one stage of Nag Hammadi scholarship and the beginning of another. The first stage was concerned with making this library of texts available; the second stage has been characterized by the discussion and interpretation of the texts.

The library of fourth-century papyrus manuscripts consists of twelve codices plus eight leaves from a thirteenth and contains fifty-two separate tractates. Due to duplications there are forty-five separate titles. Because the majority of the library's tractates derive from the Hellenistic sects now called gnostic, and survive in Coptic translations, it is characterized as the Coptic Gnostic Library. Scholarly rivalries and the situation in Egypt in the years following the library's discovery in 1945 hindered work on the manuscripts. Twenty years after the discovery only a small percentage of the texts had been edited and translated, mostly by European scholars, and less than ten percent had become available in English translations. In 1966 the team responsible for the present volume began to come together into "The Coptic Gnostic Library Project" under the auspices of the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, Claremont, California.

The editing and translating of the library could only proceed as the manuscripts became accessible. In 1970 the Ministry of Culture of the Arab Republic of Egypt, together with UNESCO, named an International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices. The representative of the United States, James M. Robinson, was elected secretary. The primary task of the committee was to oversee the publication of photographic facsimiles. Between 1972 and 1977 the entire library was thus published by E.J. Brill of Leiden as The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices. These were followed in 1979 with the publication of the Cartonnage volume and in 1984 with an Introduction volume, completing the twelve-volume Facsimile Edition. That edition was facilitated by members of The Coptic Gnostic Library Project working in the Coptic Museum in Old Cairo between 1971 and 1977 to reconstruct and conserve the manuscripts.

In 1977, coinciding with the availability of the library's complete contents in facsimile form, E.J. Brill and Harper & Row published the first

In 1981 and 1984 respectively, Harper & Row and E.J. Brill published
paperback editions of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. These included an addition to the translation of *The Dialogue of the Savior* based on fragments (144,15-146,24) discovered by Stephen Emmel in the Beinecke Library at Yale University.

At the time of the publication of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* more than a decade ago, only one title in the Coptic Gnostic Library series had appeared in print. Now, with that series nearing completion, the present book has been extensively revised to bring the translations into conformity with the critical edition’s final translations. In the case of the earlier volumes to appear, an occasional improvement on the critical edition has been made. Research in the field of Gnosticism, greatly stimulated by the work of The Coptic Gnostic Library Project, has also developed during the past ten years. New tractate introductions have been written to acknowledge the ongoing discussion. Since several titles appear in the library in more than one version, it has been possible to combine fragmentary versions of some texts to produce more complete translations. Two titles from the closely related Berlin Gnostic Papyrus are also included.

Since the original manuscripts of the library are fragmentary in many places, ellipsis dots (…) are included to indicate the place, but not the extent, of all lacunae. The page and line numbers of the papyrus codex, given in the translations, should indicate the extent of the damage. A complete portrayal of the physical condition of the manuscripts is given in *The Facsimile Edition* and in the critical edition, *The Coptic Gnostic Library*. The textual signs that appear in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* are those found in the critical edition; the reader is referred to those volumes for more scholarly matters. An ongoing bibliography in the field of gnostic studies is provided by David M. Scholer, *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1948-1969*, volume one of the series *Nag Hammadi Studies*, published by E.J. Brill in 1971, with annual updates in the journal *Novum Testamentum*. All these supplements are soon to be merged with each other and published in *Nag Hammadi Studies* in a volume entitled *Nag Hammadi Bibliography 1970-1985*. Two books recently published by Harper & Row present discussions of ancient Gnosticism and its modern scholarship: *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, 1983, by Kurt Rudolph; and *The Jesus of Heresy and History: The Discovery and Meaning of the Nag Hammadi Gnostic Library*, 1988, by John Dart.

The Coptic Gnostic Library Project has been generously supported over the years by many organizations which we would like to thank: The
Egyptian Antiquities Organization, UNESCO, the American Research Center in Egypt, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the American Philosophical Society, the Smithsonian Institution, and The Claremont Graduate School. In final appreciation, it should be said that the preparation of this thoroughly revised new edition was rendered considerably easier by the work done in the preparation of the first edition by its Managing Editor, Marvin W. Meyer.

Richard Smith
Managing Editor
TABLE OF TRACTATES IN THE
COPTIC GNOSTIC LIBRARY

The following table lists, for the thirteen Nag Hammadi Codices and Papyrus Berolinensis 8502, the codex and tractate numbers, the tractate titles as used in this edition (the titles found in the tractates themselves, sometimes simplified and standardized, or, when the tractate bears no surviving title, one supplied by the editors), and the abbreviations of these titles.

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TEXTUAL SIGNS

Small strokes above the line indicate line divisions. Every fifth line a small number is inserted in place of a stroke; the frequency of these numbers, however, may vary in tractates which are quite fragmentary. A new page is indicated with a number in bold type. When the beginning of a new line or page coincides with the opening of a paragraph, the line divider or number is placed at the end of the previous paragraph.

[ ] Square brackets indicate a lacuna in the manuscript. When the text cannot be reconstructed, three dots are placed within the brackets, regardless of the size of the lacuna; a fourth dot, if appropriate, may function as a period. An exception to this rule is the occasional use of a different number of dots to estimate the extent of the missing portion of a proper noun. In a few instances the dots are used without brackets to indicate a series of Coptic letters which do not constitute a translatable sense unit. A bracket is not allowed to divide a word, except for a hyphenated word or a proper noun. Other words are placed entirely inside or outside the brackets, depending on the certainty of the Coptic word and the number of Coptic letters visible.

〈 〉 Pointed brackets indicate a correction of a scribal omission or error. The translator has either inserted letters unintentionally omitted by the scribe, or replaced letters erroneously inserted with what the scribe presumably intended to write.

{  } Braces indicate superfluous letters or words added by the scribe.

(  ) Parentheses indicate material supplied by the editor or translator. Although this material may not directly reflect the text being translated, it provides useful information for the reader.
INTRODUCTION

by

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1. The Stance of the Texts

The Nag Hammadi library is a collection of religious texts that vary widely from each other as to when, where, and by whom they were written. Even the points of view diverge to such an extent that the texts are not to be thought of as coming from one group or movement. Yet these diversified materials must have had something in common that caused them to be chosen by those who collected them. The collectors no doubt contributed to this unity by finding in the texts hidden meanings not fully intended by the original authors. After all, one of them, *The Gospel of Thomas*, begins with a word to the wise: “Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.” Thus the texts can be read at two levels: what the original author may have intended to communicate and what the texts may subsequently have been taken to communicate.

The focus that brought the collection together is an estrangement from the mass of humanity, an affinity to an ideal order that completely transcends life as we know it, and a life-style radically other than common practice. This life-style involved giving up all the goods that people usually desire and longing for an ultimate liberation. It is not an aggressive revolution that is intended, but rather a withdrawal from involvement in the contamination that destroys clarity of vision.

As such, the focus of this library has much in common with primitive Christianity, with eastern religion, and with “holy men” (and women) of all times, as well as with the more secular equivalents of today, such as the counter-culture movements coming from the 1960s. Disinterest in the goods of a consumer society, withdrawal into communes of the like-minded away from the bustle and clutter of big-city distraction, non-involvement in the compromises of political process, sharing an in-group’s knowledge both of the disaster-course of the culture and of an ideal, radical alternative not commonly known — all this in modern garb is the real challenge rooted in such materials as the Nag Hammadi library.
To be sure, these roots, fascinating and provocative as they are, can also be confusing and even frustrating, not only for the person scarcely open to what they have to say, but also to the more attentive who seek to follow the light glimmering through the flow of language. For the point of the Nag Hammadi library has been battered and fragmented by the historical process through which it has finally come to light. A salvage operation is needed at many levels if that point is to be grasped clearly today. The ancient world’s religious and philosophical traditions and mythology were all that was available to express what was in fact a quite untraditional stance. Indeed the stance was too radical to establish itself within the organized religions or philosophical schools of the day, and hence was hardly able to take advantage of the culture’s educational institutions to develop and clarify its implications. Gnostic schools began to emerge within Christianity and Neoplatonism, until both agreed in excluding them as the “heresy” of Gnosticism. Thus meaningful and eloquent myths and philosophic formulations of that radical stance became in their turn garbled traditions, re-used by later and lesser authors whose watered-down, not to say muddied, version may be most of what has survived ... though there are several “classics” in the Nag Hammadi library.

The texts were translated one by one from Greek into Coptic, and not always by translators capable of grasping the profundity or sublimity of what they sought to translate. The translator of a brief section of Plato’s Republic clearly did not understand the text, though it obviously seemed edifying and worth translating. Fortunately, most texts are better translated, but when there are duplications one can sense what a difference the better translation makes in comparison to the poor translation – which leads one to wonder about the bulk of the texts that exist only in a single version.

There is the same kind of hazard in the transmission of the texts by a series of scribes who copied them, generation after generation, from increasingly corrupt copies, first in Greek and then in Coptic. The number of unintentional errors is hard to estimate, since such a thing as a clean control copy does not exist; nor does one have, as in the case of the Bible, a quantity of manuscripts of the same text that tend to correct each other when compared. Only when the error can be detected as such in the sole copy we have can it be corrected. In addition there is the physical deterioration of the books themselves, which began no doubt before they were buried around 400 C.E., advanced steadily while they remained buried, and unfortunately was not completely halted in the period between their
discovery in 1945 and their final conservation some thirty years later. When only a few letters are missing, they can often be filled in adequately, but larger holes must simply remain a blank.

The reader should not be misled by such impediments to understanding into thinking that the stance inherent in these essays is unworthy of serious consideration. Rather, we have to do here with an understanding of existence, an answer to the human dilemma, an attitude toward society, that is worthy of being taken quite seriously by anyone able and willing to grapple with such ultimate issues. This basic stance has until now been known almost exclusively through the myopic view of heresy-hunters, who often quote only to refute or ridicule. Thus the coming to light of the Nag Hammadi library gives unexpected access to the gnostic stance as Gnostics themselves presented it. It may provide new roots for the uprooted.

Those who collected this library were Christians, and many of the essays were originally composed by Christian authors. In a sense this should not be surprising, since primitive Christianity was itself a radical movement. Jesus called for a full reversal of values, advocating the end of the world as we have known it and its replacement by a quite new, utopian kind of life in which the ideal would be real. He took a stand quite independent of the authorities of his day . . . and did not last very long before they eliminated him. Yet his followers reaffirmed his stand — for them he came to personify the ultimate goal. Yet some of his circle, being a bit more practical, followed a more conventional way of life. The circle gradually became an established organization with a quite natural concern to maintain order, continuity, lines of authority, and stability. But this concern could encourage a commitment to the status quo, rivaling, and at times outweighing, the commitment to the ultimate goal far beyond any and every achievement. Those who cherished the radical dream, the ultimate hope, would tend to throw it up as an invidious comparison to what was achieved, and thus seem to be disloyal, and to pose a serious threat to the organization.

As the cultural situation changed with the passage of time and the shift of environments, the language for expressing such radical transcendence itself underwent change. The world of thought from which Jesus and his first followers had come was the popular piety of the Jewish synagogue, focused in terms of John the Baptist’s rite of transition from the old regime to the new ideal world whose dramatic arrival was forthcoming. In this way of thinking, the evil system that prevails is not the way things inherently are. In principle, though not in practice, the world is good.
The evil that pervades history is a blight, ultimately alien to the world as such. But for some, the outlook on life increasingly darkened; the very origin of the world was attributed to a terrible fault, and evil was given status as the ultimate ruler of the world, not just a usurpation of authority. Hence the only hope seemed to reside in escape. Because humans, or at least some humans, are at heart not the product of such an absurd system, but by their very nature belong to the ultimate. Their plight is that they have been duped and lured into the trap of trying to be content in the impossible world, alienated from their true home. And for some, concentrated inwardness undistracted by external factors came to be the only way to attain the repose, the overview, the merger into the All which is the destiny of one's spark of the divine.

Christian Gnosticism thus emerged as a reaffirmation, though in somewhat different terms, of the original stance of transcendence central to the very beginnings of Christianity. Such Gnostic Christians surely considered themselves the faithful continuation, under changing circumstances, of that original stance which made Christians Christians. But the "somewhat different terms" "under changing circumstances" also involved real divergences, and other Christians clearly considered Gnosticism a betrayal of the original Christian position. This was the conviction of not just those who had accommodated themselves to the status quo, but no doubt also of some who retained the full force of the original protest and ultimate hope. The departure from the original language could be exploited to unite opposition across the breadth of the church. Thus Gnostics came to be excluded from the church as heretics.

In the New Testament two such Gnostic Christians are repudiated at the beginning of the second century (2 Timothy 2:16-18):

Avoid empty and worldly chatter; those who indulge in it will stray further and further into godless courses, and the infection of their teaching will spread like a gangrene. Such are Hymenaeus and Philetus; they have shot wide of the truth in saying that our resurrection has already taken place, and are upsetting people's faith.

This view, that the Christian's resurrection has already taken place as a spiritual reality, is advocated in The Treatise on the Resurrection, The Exegesis on the Soul, and The Gospel of Philip in the Nag Hammadi library!

But the Nag Hammadi library also documents the fact that the rejection was mutual, in that Christians described there as "heretical" seem to be more like what is usually thought of as "orthodox."
Apocalypse of Peter has Jesus criticize mainstream Christianity as follows:

They will cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure. But they will become greatly defiled and they will fall into the name of error and into the hand of an evil, cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled heretically. For some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. And they will say evil things against each other . . . But many others, who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error, will set up their error and their law against these pure thoughts of mine, as looking out from one (perspective), thinking that good and evil are from one (source). They do business in my word . . . And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgement of the leaders. These people are dry canals.

With the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity of the more conventional kind, the survival chances of Gnostic Christianity, such as that reflected in the Nag Hammadi library, were sharply reduced. The Bishop of Cyprus, Epiphanius, whose main work was a “medicine chest” against all heresies, describes his encounter with Gnosticism in Egypt about the same time the Nag Hammadi library was being collected:

For I happened on this sect myself, beloved, and was actually taught these things in person, out of the mouths of practising Gnostics. Not only did women under this delusion offer me this line of talk, and divulge this sort of things to me. With impudent boldness moreover, they tried to seduce me themselves . . . But the merciful God rescued me from their wickedness, and thus — after reading them and their books, understanding their true intent and not being carried away with them, and after escaping without taking the bait — I lost no time reporting them to the bishops there, and finding out which ones were hidden in the church. Thus they were expelled from the city, about eighty persons, and the city was cleared of their tarelike, thorny growth.

Gnosticism was ultimately eradicated from Christendom, except for occasional underground movements, some affinities in medieval mysticism, and an occasional tamed echo that stays just within the limits of propriety, for example within English romanticism:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And Cometh from afar.

. . .
The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Gnosticism of sorts was also able to continue beyond the frontiers of the Roman-Empire-become-Christendom. It is still extant in the war-torn area of Iraq and Iran in the form of a small sect called Mandeans, which is their word for "knowers," that is to say, "Gnostics."

This same withdrawal to inwardness or despair of the world from which the Gnostic stance emerged, swept not only through early Christianity to produce Christian Gnosticism, but also through late antiquity in general, thus producing forms of Gnosticism outside of Christianity. There is a long-standing debate among historians of religion as to whether Gnosticism is to be understood as only an inner-Christian development or as a movement broader than, and hence independent of, and perhaps even prior to Christianity. This debate seems to be resolving itself, on the basis of the Nag Hammadi library, in favor of understanding Gnosticism as a much broader phenomenon than the Christian Gnosticism documented by the heresiologists.

There is, to begin with, the question of Jewish Gnosticism. It would seem that there is considerable historical truth to the view of the heresiologists, to the effect that some Christian heresies go back to Jewish sects. After all, Christianity itself grew up within Judaism, and it would be surprising if it did not reflect various strands of the Judaism of the day. Primitive Christianity was itself not a unified movement. The Jewish Christianity of the first generation in Galilee that developed the collection of sayings imbedded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke may well have been considered heretical even by Paul and the Hellenists, and the feeling may have been mutual. Paul clearly rejected as heretical the Christian "Judaizers." Then later in the first century all the various strands of Jewish Christianity were excluded from Judaism, as "normative" Judaism emerged in response to the threat to Jewish identity posed by the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

Some of the gnostic essays in the Nag Hammadi library do not seem to reflect Christian tradition, but do build upon the Old Testament, which was of course also the Jewish Bible. But the very idea of Jewish Gnosticism is at times rejected as a contradiction in terms. How could Jews designate their God as the malevolent force whose misguided blunder produced the world, a God who was ignorant of the hidden good God beyond? Since Christians worship the same God as do Jews, this argument could also be made against the very idea of Christian Gnosticism. But since the early Christian heresy-hunters clearly identified Gnostics as Christians, though of course heretical Christians, the concept of Christian Gnosticism is firmly established. To use another
analogy, Simon Magus, one of the earliest known Gnostics, was from Samaria, although the Samaritans worshipped in their own way the same God as did the Jews and Christians. Hence the concept of Jewish Gnostics is intelligible, even if, from a given normative point of view, the validity of using the word Jewish, Christian, or Samaritan for such a person or text may be contested. Of course we do not actually know the Gnostics who built upon Jewish or Old Testament traditions, other than through the texts containing such traditions, so that all one really has in view in speaking of Jewish Gnosticism is just Jewish cultural traditions lacking visible Christian overlay, without necessarily any further identification of the bearers of these traditions.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has already drawn attention to the fact that first-century Judaism was quite pluralistic in its theological positions, and contained a number of divergent groups or sects. The Essenes, prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, were in a situation much like the Gnostics prior to the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library: they too were a movement about which too little was known to be treated with the seriousness it deserved. Now we know that the Essenes were a Jewish sect that had broken with the official Judaism of the Jerusalem temple and had withdrawn to the desert at the Wadi Qumran. They understood their situation in terms of the antithesis of light and darkness, truth and lie, a dualism that ultimately went back to Persian dualism—and then moved forward toward Gnosticism. The history of Gnosticism, as documented in the Nag Hammadi library, takes up about where the history of the Essenes, as documented by the Dead Sea Scrolls, breaks off. Later Jewish mystical traditions, traced especially by Gershom Scholem, have shown that, inconsistent though it seems, gnostic trends have continued to carry on a clandestine existence within the context of normative Judaism.

Some traits previously thought to be characteristic of Christian Gnosticism have been shown by the Nag Hammadi library to be originally non-Christian, though a Jewish ingredient is unmistakable. Irenaeus presents Barbelo as the leading mythological figure of a Christian Gnostic group designated "Barbelo-Gnostics." But *The Three Steles of Seth* is a Gnostic text without Christian ingredients that nonetheless gives Barbelo a prominent position. Hippolytus cites a "Paraphrase of Seth" as a Christian Gnostic text. But a very similar Nag Hammadi text, *The Paraphrase of Shem*, lacks a Christian ingredient. It is understandable that Christian heresiologists were primarily concerned to refute the Christian form of gnostic texts and movements. But this should not be
taken to indicate that the Christian form is the original form, especially when the Nag Hammadi discovery gives documentation of a non-Christian form.

Another instance, though in this case not necessarily gnostic, is the mythological birth narrative in Revelation 12, which commentators have had the greatest difficulty in deriving from any version of the birth stories about Jesus. But *The Apocalypse of Adam* has a series of non-Christian narrations of the coming of the savior that have much the same outline, and thus show a shared mythological background that is not Christian.

It is especially the Sethian texts in the Nag Hammadi library that as a group attest a non-Christian Gnosticism that had not been previously documented so clearly. The Sethian corpus spans the transition from non-Christian to Christianized Gnosticism, as has been summarized by the leading expert on Sethianism as follows: “Most writings of our text group contain no Christian elements at all (*The Three Steles of Seth, Allogenes, Marsanes, The Thought of Norea*); others contain barely Christian motifs (*Zostrianus, The Apocalypse of Adam*) or display only here and there a Christian veneer (*Trimorphic Protennoia, The Gospel of the Egyptians*); while only a few (*The Hypostasis of the Archons, Melchizedek, The Apocryphon of John*) come near to being what is called Christian Gnosis.”

In none of these Sethian instances can one derive the texts or their mythology primarily from Christian tradition. For the Christian ingredient seems so external to the main thrust of the text that one is inclined to think it was added by a Christian editor, translator, or scribe to what had been originally composed as a non-Christian text, even though the purely non-Christian form is no longer extant. For example, the *Trimorphic Protennoia*, where a secondary Christianizing has taken place, has nonetheless its roots in the same Jewish wisdom speculation as does the Prologue of the Gospel of John. It is also part of this Christianizing trend when “the Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit” is given by some scribe the secondary title “The Gospel of the Egyptians.” Thus one concludes that though the Sethian corpus was obviously usable by Christians (as were other non-Christian texts such as the Old Testament), it derives from non-Christian “Jewish” Gnosticism.

The Nag Hammadi library even presents one instance of the Christianizing process taking place almost before one’s eyes. The non-Christian philosophic treatise *Eugnostos the Blessed* is cut up somewhat arbitrarily into separate speeches, which are then put on Jesus’ tongue, in answer to questions (which sometimes do not quite fit the answers) that the dis-
ciples address to him during a resurrection appearance. The result is a separate tractate entitled *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*. Both forms of the text occur side by side in Codex III.

Some of the Nag Hammadi texts, and again often the Sethian traditions, seem to have appropriated a philosophic and Neoplatonic orientation. Plotinus, the leading Neoplatonist of the third century C.E., does in fact refer to Gnostics within his school: "We feel a certain regard for some of our friends who happened upon this way of thinking before they became our friends, and, though I do not know how they manage it, continue in it." But the school turned against Gnosticism, as Plotinus' polemics indicate. His pupil Porphyry reports in his *Life of Plotinus*:

There were in his time many Christians and others, and sectarian who had abandoned the old philosophy, men ... who ... produced revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianos and Nicotheus and Allogenes and Messos and other people of the kind, themselves deceived and deceiving many, alleging that Plato had not penetrated to the depths of intelligible reality. Plotinus hence often attacked their position in his lectures, and wrote the treatise to which we had given the title "Against the Gnostics"; he left it to us to assess what he passed over. Amelius went to forty volumes in writing against the book of Zostrianos.

The Nag Hammadi library contains treatises with two such titles, Zostrianos and Allogenes, which hence may well be those refuted by Amelius and other Neoplatonists. And such Nag Hammadi texts as the *Trimorphic Protennoia* and *Marsanes* are quite similar in philosophic orientation. Plotinus' own attack on gnostic "magic chants" addressed to the "higher powers" may have in view hymnic texts like *The Three Steles of Seth*. Thus the Nag Hammadi library makes an important contribution not only to the history of religion, but also to the history of philosophy.

The Nag Hammadi library also includes material drawing upon other religious traditions than the Judeo-Christian heritage. There are, for example, Hermetic texts that build on Egyptian lore. Typically they present dialogues of initiation between the deities Hermes Trismegistus and his son Tat. *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth* in the Nag Hammadi library is such a previously unknown Hermetic text. And, whereas one could debate whether a good number of texts in the library are actually gnostic or not, depending on how one defines Gnosticism and interprets texts, a few, such as *The Sentences of Sextus*, clearly are not gnostic. But, just as a gnostic interpretation of the Bible became possible, one may assume that these moralistic maxims could also be fitted into a gnostic orientation.
Since the Nag Hammadi library seems to have been collected in terms of Christian Gnosticism, it is sometimes difficult to conceive of some of the texts, such as the Hermetic ones, being used by persons who thought of themselves as Christian. One text even claims a Zoroastrian heritage, in that it is ascribed to his grandfather (or, possibly, uncle) Zostrianos and in a cryptogram even mentions Zoroaster. Yet Gnostics were more ecumenical and syncretic with regard to religious traditions than were orthodox Christians, so long as they found in them a stance congenial to their own. If they could identify Seth with Jesus, they probably could produce Christianizing interpretations of Hermes and Zoroaster as well.

Thus Gnosticism seems not to have been in its essence just an alternate form of Christianity. Rather it was a radical trend of release from the dominion of evil or of inner transcendence that swept through late antiquity and emerged within Christianity, Judaism, Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and the like. As a new religion it was syncretistic, drawing upon various religious heritages. But it was held together by a very decided stance, which is where the unity amid the wide diversity is to be sought.

2. The Manuscripts

The Nag Hammadi library is important for the content of the many lost Greek works it has preserved in Coptic translation. It also sheds significant light upon the production of the Coptic books themselves, and hence upon those who copied, read, and buried them.

The Nag Hammadi library consists of twelve books, plus eight leaves removed from a thirteenth book in late antiquity and tucked inside the front cover of the sixth. These eight leaves comprise a complete text, an independent treatise taken out of a book of collected essays. In fact, each of the books, except the tenth, consists of a collection of relatively brief works. Thus there is a total of fifty-two tractates. Since a single book usually contains several tractates, one may suspect that, like the books of the Bible, the texts were composed with a small format in mind, but that a larger format had come into use by the time these extant copies were made. This can be explained in terms of the history of the manufacture of books.

The roll was the usual form of a book up until the first centuries C.E., when it began to be replaced by a more economical format that permitted writing on both sides, namely the modern book with individual leaves. Technically speaking, a book in the form of a roll is a “scroll” or “volume” (from the Latin verb meaning “to roll”). But a book in the form
of a modern book is a "codex" (plural: "codices"), the Latin word for a set of wooden waxed tablets tied together as a scratch pad, which was the ancestor of the book with papyrus, parchment, or paper leaves. Whereas literary works continued to be written in the more prestigious form of the scroll, Christians (but not Jews) soon came to prefer the more economical codex. The codex was also more practical than the scroll, as anyone who has worked with microfilm knows. The inconvenience and wear-and-tear of unrolling and then rerolling the scroll every time one wanted to resume reading or look up a reference led to the replacement of the scroll with the codex, just as today there is a trend away from rolls of microfilm and toward microfiche.

In Egypt the most common writing material was papyrus. The triangular stalk of the papyrus plant is filled with fibrous pith that can be cut or peeled off in long thin strips. These strips are laid side by side and then a second layer is placed at right angles on top. When this is pressed, dried, and polished it becomes a flexible, smooth, and durable writing surface. Whereas these papyrus sheets were usually only about twenty centimeters long, those used in the Nag Hammadi library were often over a meter in length. Since this was a technological feat for that time, it indicated the importance of the books for those who made them.

A series of such papyrus writing surfaces was placed side by side so as to overlap a couple of centimeters where they were pasted together. The result was a papyrus roll, often about three meters long. Sheets ranging in breadth from twenty to forty centimeters would be cut from such rolls, from the right end of the roll to the left. Enough rolls would be thus cut up to produce a stack of from twenty to forty sheets, which, when folded down the middle, formed the quire of a codex. The fact that from two to six rolls were used to manufacture a single codex helps to explain the fact that a codex could contain more than one text, if each text had originally been composed with the size of the roll in view.

Since each strip of papyrus has a fiber pattern as distinctive as a fingerprint, the more fragmentary books in the Nag Hammadi library were reassembled by locating the position of the fibers of a fragment or a leaf on the original papyrus sheet that had been made from the papyrus strips. Then its position within the roll and ultimately within the codex could be calculated.

The Coptic Museum in Cairo, where the Nag Hammadi library is kept, has assigned a number to each book. At the time this was done, the numeration was thought to be the order in which they would be published, which in turn reflected a value judgment in terms of their impor-
tance and state of preservation. Only the very fragmentary fourth book is an exception to this tendency—it was given its relatively high position because the two tractates it contains are duplicates of tractates in the third book. For convenience of reference the tractates are numbered consecutively in each book. Although the numeration systems used for the books, tractates, and even pages have varied widely over the past generation, the numeration used here is that of the Coptic Museum and of The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices and hence should supersede older numerations.

Of the fifty-two tractates, six that are duplicates (III,1; IV,1 and 2; V,1; XII,2; and XIII,1) are not included in the present work since there is a better copy that is included. Six more were already extant when the Nag Hammadi library was discovered, either in the original Greek (VI,5 and 7, and XII,1), or in translation, in Latin (VI,8) or Coptic (II,1 and III,4). The two in Coptic are from a papyrus codex, now in Berlin, called BG 8502, which to this extent is a codex similar to the Nag Hammadi library. For this reason the other two tractates it contains are included at the end of the present work. To get an impression of the amount of literature that has survived only in the Nag Hammadi library, one may subtract the total of twelve duplications inside or outside the Nag Hammadi library and thus reach the figure of forty newly recovered texts. To be sure, a few fragments existed of three of these, one in Greek (II,2) and two in Coptic (II,5 and VII,4), but they had not been identified as such until the complete text became available in the Nag Hammadi library. Now that the whole library is accessible, fragments of still others may be identified. But such vestiges of a tractate are more tantalizing than useful. Hence a more serious limitation on the figure of forty new texts is the fact that some of these are themselves quite fragmentary (VIII,1; IX,1, 2, and 3; XI,1, 2, 3, and 4; and XII,3). It would be safe to think of the Nag Hammadi library as adding to the amount of literature that has survived from antiquity thirty fairly complete texts, and ten that are more fragmentary.

Although the Nag Hammadi library is in Coptic, the texts were originally composed in Greek. Hence the fact that they were discovered in Upper Egypt may be misleading. Some of course have been composed in Egypt, for several contain specific allusions to Egypt: Asclepius calls Egypt the “image of heaven”; On the Origin of the World appeals to “the water hydri in Egypt” and “the two bulls in Egypt” as witnesses; and The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth instructs the son to “write this book for the temple at Diospolis (Magna near Luxor or Parva near
Nag Hammadi) in hieroglyphic characters.” Yet the Greek-writing authors may have been located anywhere in the ancient world where Greek was used, such as Greece itself (VI,5), or Syria (II,2), or Jordan (V,5). Much the same is the case with the Bible and other ancient texts written in various parts of the ancient world and preserved in the “dry sands of Egypt.” Thus the Nag Hammadi library involves the collecting of what was originally a Greek literary productivity by largely unrelated and anonymous authors spread through the eastern half of the ancient world and covering a period of almost half a millennium (or more, if one takes into consideration a brief section of Plato’s Republic, VI,5).

Almost nothing is known about the different persons who translated the tractates into Coptic, or those who copied, used, and buried them, other than what may be inferred from the books themselves. The Egyptian reading public in this period was largely familiar with Greek, and hence Greek literature was imported and copied extensively. A Roman garrison town, Diospolis Parva, with Greek-speaking Galatian troops from Asia Minor, was just across the Nile from the site where the Nag Hammadi library was buried. A Greek inscription reading “In behalf of the [good] fortune of Emperor [Caesar] Trajan Hadrian [Augustus]” has been found at Chenoboskia, on the right bank of the Nile in sight of the place of the burial. Greek prayers to Zeus Sarapis mentioning Antioch are found in two caves in the cliff near where the books were buried. But, more and more, Greek texts such as the Bible and the Nag Hammadi library were translated into the native Egyptian language. This can be illustrated for the region in which the library was produced, read, and buried, and for approximately the same period of time, from The Life of St. Pachomius. This text, which itself exists in both Greek and Coptic, tells that a Greek-speaking monk from Alexandria came to Pachomius, who “made him live in the same dwelling with an old brother who knew the Greek language,” while he learned the native tongue. Meanwhile Pachomius “made every effort to learn Greek by the grace of God in order to discover the way of offering him solace frequently. Then Pachomius appointed him house manager of the Alexandrian and other foreign brothers who came after him.”

When the Egyptian language is written with the Greek alphabet (plus a few letters for sounds Greeks did not make), it is called Coptic. The Nag Hammadi library is written in two Coptic dialects. Even among the texts translated into the same dialect, minor divergences point to a plurality of translators, who do not correspond to the plurality of scribes responsible for surviving copies. In the case of duplicates, different trans-
lators were involved, working from divergent Greek texts. The translation process may have been spread over a wide area of Egypt, and more than a single century.

Each codex was bound in leather. The outline of the desired book size was often scored onto the leather, whereupon the flesh side of the outlined area was lined with used papyrus pasted into thick cardboards called cartonnage, producing a hardback effect. This used papyrus consisted of Greek and Coptic letters and business documents, and has produced names of persons and places as well as dates that help to determine the time and place of the manufacture of the covers. After a cover was thus lined with cartonnage, a strip of the cover was turned in at the head and foot of the front and back cover and at the fore edge of the back cover. Since the line of the animal's spine usually ran horizontally across the cover, the narrowing of the skin leading to the animal's tail could be retained to form a flap extending from the fore edge of the front cover. To this was added a thong to encircle horizontally the closed book. This may have been a practice taken over from the manufacture of a papyrus scroll, where a parchment wrapper and thong were traditionally used to protect it and hold it closed. A thong was also needed to hold a codex closed. Each of the Nag Hammadi books has a single quire, that is to say, a single stack of sheets folded down the center to produce the writing surfaces (although in Codex I the main quire is supplemented with two smaller quires). Such large quires would tend to gape at the fore edge unless securely tied. Shorter thongs extending from the head and foot of the front and back covers were tied together to aid in holding the codex closed.

Two of the covers (IV and VIII) lack a flap on the fore edge of the front cover, though they do have the usual thong. A third cover of a similar construction (V) has such a flap added to the fore edge of the front cover. These three books thus seem to have been made from smaller skins, and the poor quality of the papyrus used for their quires confirms the impression of economy. Other covers include a leather reinforcement (called by bookbinders a "mull") that lines the spine and protects the cover and the quire from the pressure of the binding thongs that run through the fold at the center of the quire, as well as two horizontal supportive thongs lying between the cover and the mull. Three covers have such a construction (VI, IX, and X). They form a second group among the covers, together with another similarly constructed cover (II), which however is now lacking whatever lining it may have had. This group is characterized both by such advances in technique as have just been men-
tioned and by a higher aesthetic quality. Indeed, the cover of Codex II has rather beautiful tinted tooling. The four other covers (I, III, VII, XI) do not share distinctive traits, except for a certain primitiveness, which would make it possible to assign them to a group.

The scribes involved in producing the thirteen codices can be distinguished by their handwriting. There seem to be few clear instances of a single scribe working on more than one codex: One scribe copied most of Codex I, but a second scribe copied tractate 4 of Codex I; this second scribe also copied tractates 1 and 2 of Codex XI. A third scribe copied in a different dialect tractates 3 and 4 of Codex XI and also Codex VII. Thus three of the four books that seem unrelated to each other in terms of the way the covers were made do seem interrelated in terms of the scribes who wrote them. Conversely it was earlier thought that one scribe copied Codices IV, V, VI, VIII and IX, which would mean that the two groups distinguished in terms of leather covers must have been related by scribal hand. But more recent study of the hands has indicated that one has to do with different, even if similar, hands, that diverge most clearly just where the bookbinding divergences take place, thereby belatedly confirming, rather than relativizing, the distinction into groups based initially only on the leather covers.

The two groups of covers plus four miscellaneous covers, and the one group of scribal hands plus miscellaneous scribes, may indicate that the Nag Hammadi library is a secondary merging of what was originally a series of smaller libraries or isolated books. This would seem to be confirmed by the distribution of the duplicates. No one codex contains two copies of the same work, nor is there a duplicate tractate among the books of one group of covers. Nor did the same scribe, with but one exception, copy the same text twice. The one exception would seem to be II, 4 and XIII, 2, which are the same text in the same scribal hand and with almost identical wording. Yet the second copy was discarded, when Codex XIII was torn apart and only one tractate (XIII, 7) preserved inside the front cover of Codex VI — together with a few opening lines of XIII, 2 on the back of the last leaf, which could not be discarded without mutilating the text one was seeking to preserve (XIII, 7). The fact that this scribal duplication was nullified by separating off XIII, 2 (except for the unavoidable opening lines) may attest to what seems to have been an awareness of the unnecessariness of such duplication. A scribal note in Codex VI expresses concern not to displease whoever commissioned the work by duplicating something already owned. Hence when duplication does turn up in terms of the whole library, one is inclined to think the
books with the duplication were not produced with the whole library of thirteen books in view. Both the tractates in Codex IV are also in Codex III, so that Codex IV is wholly superfluous in the present library. And there is a total of three copies of the Apocryphon of John (II,1; III,1; and IV,1), one from each of the three classifications of covers. Thus one may conjecture that the present library derives from at least three smaller collections.

The dating of Coptic literary hands, such as those attested in the texts before us, is much less certain than is the dating of Greek literary hands, or the dating of the cursive business hands of the day. A thorough study of the hands of the Nag Hammadi library has not yet been made, although dates ranging at least from early to late fourth century C.E. have been proposed. The texts themselves do not normally contain dates or datable historical references. But The Concept of Our Great Power may provide one reference that can serve as a point of departure for dating Codex VI: "Cease from the evil lusts and desires and (the teachings of) the Anomoeans, evil heresies that have no basis!" While the Archbishop of Alexandria, Athanasius, was in hiding in the Pachomian monasteries in the late 350s C.E., "Anomoean" heretics were flourishing for a brief period in Alexandria. Probably this text received its final form no earlier than at this time.

The papyrus used for letters and business documents and reused to thicken the leather covers may be located in time and space with more ease than can the leaves that comprise the quires bound with the help of these covers. Dates found in such "cartonnage" of Codex VII are 341, 346, and 348 C.E. This indicates that the cover of Codex VII was manufactured no earlier than the latest date, but perhaps as much as a generation after these dates. A document found in the cartonnage of Codex I mentions "Diospol[is] near Chenobos[kia]." Other locations in the same general region also occur in the cartonnage of the other covers. Some of the cartonnage in the cover of Codex VII seems to have belonged to a monk named Sansnos who was in charge of the cattle of a monastery, which would no doubt account for his close relationship to the manufacture of the leather covers. The headquarters of the monastery of the Pachomian order at Pabau, where the Basilica of Saint Pachomius was located, as well as the third Pachomian monastery at Chenoboskia, where Pachomius himself began his Christian life as a hermit, are only 8.7 and 5.3 kilometers (5.4 and 3.3 miles) respectively from the place where the library was buried. Thus the provenience of the Nag Hammadi codices has often been identified with the Pachomian Monastic Order, which
among other things involved a large-scale literary program at the appropria
t time and place of the production of the Nag Hammadi codices. But the publica
tion of this cartonnage in 1981 involved a critical sifting of the evidence, which proved to be less conclusive than had been previously maintained. The relation of the Nag Hammadi codices to the Pachomian movement remains a tantalizing possibility, more concrete than any other that has been suggested, and yet far from assured.

In view of the orthodoxy of the Pachomian monasteries reflected in *The Life of St. Pachomius* and other monastic legends, some have hesi
tated to associate the Nag Hammadi library with these monasteries, unless it be that such texts were copied for ready reference in refuting heresy. But a defender of Christian orthodoxy would hardly bother to collect the non-Christian texts that are in the Nag Hammadi library. And some of the Christian texts are not explicitly “heretical” and hence would hardly have been included in such a blacklist. The very fact that the library seems to have been made up by combining several smaller col
tections tends to point toward individual Christian Gnostics or monas
teries producing individual books or small collections for their own spiritual enlightenment, rather than to a heresy-hunting scribal cam
paign. Since the familiar heresy-hunting literature is in Greek, one should hesitate to postulate such a widespread heresy-hunting activity in Coptic. And the Pachomian literature transmitted through monastic channels is much more pedestrian.

Of course it is conceivable that book manufacture could have been one of the handicrafts common in monasteries to produce commodities to trade or sell for the necessities of life. Hence one could conjecture that uninscribed books were produced in the monastery and sold to Gnostics (or anyone else) to inscribe as they saw fit. But there is some evidence from that period that books were first inscribed and then bound, as when a line of writing passes through the fold at the spine. And in the Nag Hammadi library blotting is usually present on the first and last pages but not elsewhere, which may perhaps be explained as due to the damp
ess of the paste in the cartonnage at the time of the binding, in which case the quire would have had to have been inscribed before being bound.

The care and religious devotion reflected in the manufacture of the Nag Hammadi library hardly suggest that the books were produced out of antagonism or even disinterest in their contents, but rather reflect the veneration accorded to holy texts. The leather covers are not very ornate, compared, for example, with reports that Manichaean books were studded with jewels (though the very plain extant wooden covers of the Mani-
chaean codices of Medinet Madi are even simpler than the Nag Hammadi covers. Yet simplicity would be appropriate to the Pachomian monasteries. *The Life of St. Pachomius* reports: "He also taught the brothers to pay no attention to the loveliness and beauty of this world, whether it be beautiful food or clothing, or a cell, or an outwardly seductive book."

The simple tooling of some of the leather covers does include crosses (II, IV, VIII). The *ankh* hieroglyph of life that became the Christian cross *ansata* is on the beautifully tooled cover of Codex II and at the end of *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul*. The acrostic "fish" symbol standing for the creed "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" occurs in two scribal notes (in codices III and VII). In the first case the name of the scribe is preserved in the comment "in the flesh my name is Gongessos," which is probably the Latin name Concessus. He also had a spiritual name or title of Eugnostos. Thus he had some spiritual status, and referred to his "fellow lights in incorruptibility." Within this spiritual circle he described the text as "God-written." Even if such a scribal note was not composed by the scribe who copied the codex that has survived, but rather came from an earlier scribe who wrote an ancestor of the copy that survived, nevertheless the scribe of Codex III did not feel called upon to eliminate it, much less to replace it with a warning against heresy in the text. Some scribal notes, however, since they were written at the end of an extant codex, may be assumed to have been composed by the scribe of that particular codex. They reflect the godliness the scribe found in what he or she was copying. Codex II concludes with this note: "Remember me also, my brethren, [in] your prayers: Peace to the saints and those who are spiritual." Codex VII ends on a similar note: "The book belongs to the fatherhood. It is the son who wrote it. Bless me, O father. I bless you, O father, in peace. Amen." These scribal notes, together with the scribe's care to correct errors, tend to indicate that the scribes were of a religious persuasion congenial to the contents they were copying.

Perhaps the common presentation of the monastic movement of the fourth century C.E. as solidly orthodox is an anachronism, and more nearly reflects the situation of the later monasticism that recorded the legends about the earlier period. When a hermit withdrew from civilization into the desert, he also tended to be out of contact with the Church, for example with its fellowship, sacraments, and authority. Early in the fourth century there was a monk in the delta named Hierakas, a scribe by trade and a learned interpreter of the Bible, who was so ascetic in his views as to argue that marriage was limited to the old covenant, for no married person "can inherit the kingdom of heaven." Although this led
to him being classified as a heretic, it did not prevent him from having a following. *The Testimony of Truth* in the Nag Hammadi library represents a similar view:

For no one who is under the law will be able to look up to the truth, for they will not be able to serve two masters. For the defilement of the Law is manifest; but undefilement belongs to the light. The Law commands (one) to take a husband (or) to take a wife, and to beget, and to multiply like the sand of the sea. But passion which is a delight to them constrains the souls of those who are begotten in this place, those who defile and those who are defiled, in order that the Law might be fulfilled through them. And they show that they are assisting the world; and they [turn] away from the light, who are unable [to pass by] the archon of [darkness] until they pay the last [penny].

*The Life of St. Pachomius* narrates that a “philosopher” from Pano­polis (Akhmim), where Pachomius built a monastery just 108 kilometers (67 miles) downstream from where the Nag Hammadi library was buried, came to test the monk’s “understanding of the scriptures.” Pachomius sent his assistant Theodore to meet him:

The philosopher queried him on something for which the answer was not difficult to find, “Who was not born but died? Who was born but did not die? And who died without giving off the stench of decomposition?” Theodore replied that Adam was not born but died, Enoch was born but did not die, and Lot’s wife died but, having become a pillar of salt, did not give off the stench of decomposition. The philosopher accepted these answers and departed.

This may well be a faint echo of Pachomian debates with Christian Gnostics before the middle of the fourth century C.E. Epiphanius’ efforts to run Christian Gnostics out of town took place in Egypt about the same time.

In 367 C.E. Archbishop Athanasius wrote an Easter letter that con­demns heretics and their “apocryphal books to which they attribute antiquity and give the name of saints.” Theodore, by then head of the Pachomian monasteries, had the letter translated into Coptic, and “depos­ited it in the monastery to serve them as a rule.” There must still have been heretics or heretical books influencing the Pachomian monastic movement which made this act necessary. Of course many of the Nag Hammadi texts are indeed pseudonymous, that is to say, ascribed in their titles to some “saint” of the past. In another of the Pachomian legends one of “these books that the heretics write” but “give out under the name of saints” is quoted: “After Eve was deceived and had eaten the
fruit of the tree, it is of the devil that she bore Cain.” The Hypostasis of the Archons in the Nag Hammadi library has a narrative that points in this direction:

Then the authorities came to their Adam. And when they saw his female counterpart speaking with him, they became agitated with great agitation; and they became enamored of her. They said to one another, “Come let us sow our seed in her,” and they pursued her. And she laughed at them for their witlessness and their blindness; and in their clutches, she became a tree, and left them her shadowy reflection resembling herself; and they defiled [it] foully. — And they defiled the stamp of her voice, so that by the form they had modelled, together with [their] (own) image, they made themselves liable to condemnation.

Early in the fifth century C.E. Shenoute, Abbot of the White Monastery at the same Panopolis where Pachomius had founded monasteries and from which the “philosopher” had come, attacked a group at the nearby temple of Pneueit that called itself “kingless,” worshipped the “demiurge,” and would not accept Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, as their “illuminator.” These terms, which Shenoute seems to borrow from the group, are so well-known in the Nag Hammadi library that it may have been a Christian Gnostic, perhaps a Sethian group, even though in his polemic Shenoute calls them pagan heretics. He seized their “books full of abomination” and “of every kind of magic.” Indeed, series of vowels and unintelligible magic words (Plotinus called it “hissing”) occur in the Nag Hammadi library itself. Actually Pachomius himself wrote to the heads of his monasteries using a code that even his successors could not decipher! Hence the Nag Hammadi library and Pachomius’ “books of spiritual letters” may not have been entirely different in appearance from what Shenoute would call a book of magic. Shenoute threatened the heretics: “I shall make you acknowledge . . . the Archbishop Cyril, or else the sword will wipe out most of you, and moreover those of you who are spared will go into exile.” Just as the Dead Sea Scrolls were put in jars for safekeeping and hidden at the time of the approach of the Roman Tenth Legion, the burial of the Nag Hammadi library in a jar may also have been precipitated by the approach of Roman authorities, who by then had become Christian.

The fact that the Nag Hammadi library was hidden in a jar suggests the intention not to eliminate but to preserve the books. For not only were the Dead Sea Scrolls put in such jars for safekeeping, but biblical manuscripts have been found similarly preserved up and down the Nile, in some cases dating from the same period and buried in the Nag Hammadi region.
In fact, a second discovery, made in 1952, of manuscripts buried in a jar a couple of centuries later than the Nag Hammadi codices, is much more certainly the remains of a library of the Pachomian monastic order than is the Nag Hammadi discovery. For this discovery included archival copies of formal letters of abbots of the Pachomian Order. And the rest of the holdings are also what one would expect of a Pachomian library: biblical, apocryphal, martyriological, and other edifying material. To be sure, there are also some Greek (and Latin) classical texts, whose presence may be explained by the assumption that persons who joined the Pachomian movement gave their worldly possessions to the Order, which would thus have acquired non-Christian texts. Later they would have been taken to be venerable texts like the others in the archives, fragile and fragmentary relics to be preserved and no longer texts to be read.

This second discovery is known locally as the Dishnā Papers, since Dishnā near the river and railroad is the large town through which the texts were marketed. But the site of the discovery was at the foot of the Jabal Abū Manā‘, 5.5 km (3.4 miles) northwest of Dishnā, and, more significant, 5 km (3.1 miles) northeast of the headquarters of the Pachomian Order and 12 km (7.5 miles) east of the site of the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices. This manuscript discovery has been known for the past generation in scholarly circles as the Bodmer Papyri, since the largest part of it was acquired by the Bibliothèque Bodmer near Geneva. But it is only recently, in the process of tracking down the provenience of the Nag Hammadi codices, that the provenience of the Bodmer Papyri has been identified beyond the reports of the antiquities dealers and made public to the scholarly world.

The Bible refers to burial in a jar as a way to preserve a book and to burning as the way to eliminate one (Jer 32:14-15; 36:23). *The Life of St. Pachomius* reports that he got rid of a book by Origen, whom he considered a heretic, by throwing it in the water, with the comment that if the Lord’s name had not been in it he would have burned it. The burning of the greatest library in antiquity at Alexandria by Christians late in the fourth century C.E. suggests that such a ready solution would hardly have been overlooked if the intent had been to get rid of the Nag Hammadi library. If the codices had been part of a Pachomian library, they must have been removed not by heresy-hunters, but by devotees who cherished them enough to bury them in a jar for safekeeping, perhaps for posterity.

Two of the texts in the Nag Hammadi library refer to their being stored for safekeeping in a mountain until the end of time. *The Gospel of the Egyptians* concludes:
The Great Seth wrote this book with letters in one hundred and thirty years. He placed it in the mountain that is called Charaxio, in order that, at the end of the times and the eras, . . . it may come forth and reveal this incorruptible, holy race of the great savior, and those who dwell with them in love, and the great, invisible, eternal Spirit, and his only begotten Son . . .

Near the end of *Allogenès* a similar idea occurs:

Write down [the things that I] shall [tell] you and of which I shall remind you for the sake of those who will be worthy after you. And you will leave this book upon a mountain and you will adjure the guardian, "Come Dreadful One."

On each side of the Nile Valley cliffs rise abruptly to the desert above. The section of the cliff on the right bank marking the limit of the Nile Valley and the arable land between Chenoboskia and Pabau is called the Jabal al-Ṭārif. A protruding boulder shaped somewhat like a stalagmite had broken off in prehistoric times from the face of the cliff and fallen down onto the talus (the inclined plane of fallen rock that over the ages naturally collects like a buttress at the foot of a cliff). Under the northern flank of one of the huge barrel-shaped pieces of this shattered boulder the jar containing the Nag Hammadi library was secreted.

In the face of the cliff, just at the top of the talus, which can be climbed without difficulty, sixth-dynasty tombs from the reigns of Pepi I and II (2350-2200 B.C.E.) had in antiquity long since been robbed. Thus they had become cool solitary caves where a monk might well hold his spiritual retreats, as is reported of Pachomius himself, or where a hermit might have his cell. Greek prayers to Zeus Sarapis, opening lines of biblical Psalms in Coptic, and Christian crosses, all painted in red onto the walls of the caves, show that they were indeed so used. Perhaps those who cherished the Nag Hammadi library made such use of the caves, which would account for the choice of this site to bury them. The jar rested there a millennium and a half . . .

3. The Discovery

In the month of December peasants of the Najʿ Ḥammādī region of Upper Egypt fertilize their crops by carrying nitrates from the talus of the Jabal al-Ṭārif to their fields, using the saddlebags of their camels. Two brothers, Mūhammad and Khalīfah ʿAlī of the al-Sammān clan, hobbled their camels on the south side of the fallen boulder and came upon the jar as they were digging around its base. Mūhammad ʿAlī
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reports that at first he was afraid to break the jar, whose lid may have been sealed on with bitumen, for fear that a jinn might be closed up inside it; but, on reflecting that the jar might contain gold, he recovered his courage and smashed it with his mattock. Out swirled golden-like particles that disappeared into the sky — neither jinns nor gold but perhaps papyrus fragments! He wrapped the books in his tunic, slung it over his shoulder, unhobbled his camel, and carried the books home, a hovel in the hamlet of al-Qaṣr, which was the ancient site of Chenoboskia where Pachomius had begun his life as a Christian.

Half a year earlier, during the night of 7 May 1945, the father of the two brothers, whose name was ʿAlī, while on his job as night watchman guarding irrigation equipment in the fields, had killed a marauder. By mid-morning he had in turn been murdered in blood vengeance. About a month after the discovery of the books, a peasant named Aḥmad fell asleep sitting in the heat of the day on the side of the dirt road near Muḥammad ʿAlī's house, a jar of sugar-cane molasses for sale beside him. A neighbor pointed him out to Muhammad ʿAlī as the murderer of his father. He ran home and alerted his brothers and widowed mother, who had told her seven sons to keep their mattocks sharp. The family fell upon their victim, hacked off his limbs bit by bit, ripped out his heart, and devoured it among them, as the ultimate act of blood revenge.

Aḥmad was the son of the sheriff, ʿIsmāʾīl Husayn, a strong man imposed on al-Qaṣr from outside, indeed, a member of the Hawāra tribe, who is so alienated from society that it considers itself non-Arabic though directly descended from the Prophet. The village of the Hawāra, Hamrah Dūm, is just at the foot of the Jabal al-Ṭārif, for which reason Muḥammad ʿAlī has been afraid to return to the site of the discovery lest his vengeance be in turn avenged. In fact Aḥmad’s brother did avenge the death at the time by killing two members of the al-Sammān clan. Even a decade later, Ahmad’s young son, who by then was a teenager, heard that at dusk there was to be in al-Qaṣr a funeral procession of the family of Muhammad ʿAlī. He proved his manhood by sneaking into town and shooting up the procession, with a score killed and wounded. Muḥḥammad ʿAlī proudly shows a wound just above his heart, to prove that they tried but failed in vengeance. But he stoutly refused to return to the cliff to identify the site of the discovery until a camouflage costume, a governmental escort, and of course a financial consideration combined to persuade him to change his mind.

The village of al-Qaṣr was so glad to be rid of the sheriff’s son that no eye witnesses could be found to testify at the hearing. But during this pe-
period the police tended to search Muhammad 'Ali's home every evening for weapons. Having been told that the books were Christian, no doubt simply on the basis of the Coptic script, Muhammad 'Ali asked the Coptic priest of Al-Qaṣr, Bāsīliyūs 'Abd al-Masih, if he could deposit the books in his house. A priest's home would hardly be searched. Coptic priests marry, and this priest's wife had a brother, Rāghib Andrawus, who went from village to village in a circuit teaching English and history in the parochial schools of the Coptic Church. Once a week when he taught in al-Qaṣr he stayed in his sister's home. On seeing one of the books (Codex III), he recognized its potential value and persuaded the priest to give it to him. He took it to Cairo and showed it to a Coptic physician interested in the Coptic language, George Sobhi, who called in the authorities from the Department of Antiquities. They took control of the book, agreeing to pay Rāghib £300. After what seemed endless delays, Rāghib finally received £250 upon agreeing to make a gift of the balance of £50 to the Coptic Museum, where the book was deposited. The Register of the Museum records the date as 4 October 1946.

Thinking the books were worthless, perhaps even a source of bad luck, the widow of 'Ali had burned part of them in the oven (probably Codex XII, of which only a few fragmentary leaves remain). Illiterate Muslim neighbors bartered or purchased the remainder for next to nothing. Nashid Bisādah had one, and entrusted it to a gold merchant of Nag Hammadi to sell in Cairo, whereupon they divided the profit. A grain merchant is reported to have acquired another and sold it in Cairo at such a high price that he was able to set up his shop there. The villagers of al-Qaṣr identify him as Fikrī Jabra'īl, today the proprietor of the "Nag Hammadi Store" in Cairo; however, he stoutly denies any involvement, though familiar with this story. Bahij 'Ali, a one-eyed outlaw of al-Qaṣr, got most of the books. Escorted by a well-known antiquities dealer of the region, Dhaki Baṣṭa, he went to Cairo. They first offered the books to Mansoor's shop at Shepherds Hotel, and then to the shop of Phokion J. Tano, who bought their whole stock and then went to Nag Hammadi to get whatever was left.

Most of Codex I was exported from Egypt by a Belgian antiquities dealer in Cairo, Albert Eid. It was offered for sale unsuccessfully in New York and Ann Arbor in 1949, and then on 10 May 1952 was acquired in Belgium from Eid's widow Simone by the Jung Institute of Zürich and named the "Jung Codex." It was returned to Cairo bit by bit after publication, where it is conserved in the Coptic Museum. Meanwhile Tano's collection was taken into custody by the Egyptian Department of Anti-
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quities to prevent it from leaving the country. After Nasser came to power it was nationalized, with a token compensation of £4,000. Today the Nag Hammadi library is back together again, conserved in the Coptic Museum.

The Director of the Coptic Museum at the time of the discovery, Togo Mina, had studied in Paris under the Abbot Étienne Drioton, who had subsequently become Director of the Department of Antiquities of Egypt. Togo Mina had been a classmate of the wife of Jean Doresse, a young French scholar who came to Egypt to study Coptic monasteries. Togo Mina was glad to give him access to Codex III and to make plans with him for a predominantly French edition of the library, plans cut short by Mina’s death in 1949. In 1956 a meeting of some members of an international committee in Cairo led to the publication of *The Gospel of Thomas* in 1959. And the Jung Codex was gradually published in six volumes from 1956 through 1975. Meanwhile the new Director of the Coptic Museum, Pahor Labib, made plans to publish the better part of the library with the German scholars Alexander Böhlig and Martin Krause.

The General Director of UNESCO, René Maheu of France, worked out an agreement in the early 1960s with the Minister of Culture and National Guidance of the United Arab Republic, Saroite Okacha, to publish a complete edition through an international committee jointly chosen by Egypt and UNESCO. But when it was discovered that many of the choicest texts had already been assigned for publication, the UNESCO plan was limited to a facsimile edition. The project was rather dormant until the International Committee for the Nag Hammadi Codices was appointed at the end of 1970. *The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices* was published by E.J. Brill in twelve volumes from 1972 through 1984. A number of the earlier assignments have by now been published, and complete editions in English, German and French are currently being prepared. The present volume makes use of the translations from the seventeen-volume English edition, entitled *The Coptic Gnostic Library* (see p. x).

With the publication of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* the work has only just begun, for it marks a new beginning in the study of Gnosticism. Over a century ago students began to study Gnosticism in order to know what the heresy-hunting Church fathers were talking about. Around the turn of this century the History of Religions School broadened this issue by seeking the origins of Gnosticism throughout the ancient Near East. Between the two world wars, Hans Jonas produced
a philosophical interpretation of Gnosticism that for the first time made sense of it as a possible way to understand existence. Rudolf Bultmann then reinterpreted the New Testament in terms of an interaction with Gnosticism involving appropriation as well as confrontation. Yet the results of this century of research into the origin, nature, and influence of Gnosticism stand in a certain ambivalence, as if hanging in suspense. One cannot fail to be impressed by the clairvoyance, the constructive power, the learned intuitions of scholars who, from limited and secondary sources, were able to produce working hypotheses that in fact worked so well. Yet the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library has drawn attention to how meager those sources were. For even though the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library was quite accidental and its contents somewhat arbitrary, the flood of new source material it contains cannot fail to outweigh the constructions and conjectures of previous scholarship. But, for the first generation after the discovery, the new source material was at best a trickle, and the suspense produced stagnation, as the scholarly community waited and waited. Now the time has come for a concentrated effort, with the whole Nag Hammadi library accessible, to rewrite the history of Gnosticism, to understand what it was really all about, and of course to pose new questions. Rarely has a generation of students had such an opportunity! May the readers of *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* share this exhilaration, and this responsibility, with those who produced it.
THE PRAYER OF THE APOSTLE PAUL (I,1)

Introduced and translated by

DIETER MUELLER

*The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* occupies the front flyleaf of Codex I, also known as the Jung Codex. The scribe apparently added this prayer to the collection of tractates in the codex after he had finished copying *The Tripartite Tractate* (I,5). The title, followed by a brief colophon, is placed at the end of the prayer. The Greek language retained in that title was no doubt the original language of the prayer as a whole. The short text is of unknown provenance. Its general gnostic affinities are clear. Details such as the reference to the "psychic God" (A,31) may indicate Valentinian connections. That association in turn suggests a date of origin between the second half of the second century and the end of the third century.

In form and content *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* echoes various other compositions. It displays a striking resemblance not only to prayers in the *Corpus Hermeticum* (1.31-32; 5.10-11; 13.16-20) but also to invocations found in magical texts. Furthermore, its beginning is rather similar to that of the hymn of the First Stele of *The Three Steles of Seth* (VII,5). Both documents may use a common tradition. There are also similarities within *The Gospel of Philip* (II,3). In general, *The Prayer of the Apostle Paul* is heavily indebted to the Psalms and the Pauline letters. The most striking echo of the apostle, and at the same time a clear index of gnostic orientation, is the request to be granted "what no angel-eye has seen and no archon-ear has heard and what has not entered into the human heart" (cf. 1 Co 2:9).

THE PRAYER OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

I A, 1-B, 10

\[A-1 (Approximately two lines are missing.) \] 1 [your] light, give me your [mercy! My] 1 Redeemer, redeem me, for 5 [I am] yours; the one who has come 1 forth from you. You are [my] mind; bring me forth! 1 You are my treasure house; open for me! You 1 [are] my fullness; take me to you! 1 You are (my) repose; give me 10 [the] perfect thing that cannot be grasped! 1

I invoke you, the one who is 1 and who pre-existed in the name 1 [which is] exalted above every name, through Jesus Christ, 1 [the Lord] of Lords, the King of the ages; 15 give me your gifts, of which you do
not repent, through the Son of Man, the Spirit, the Paraclete of [truth]. Give me authority [when I] ask you; give healing for my body when I ask you through the Evangelist, [and] redeem my eternal light soul and my spirit. And the First-born of the Pleroma of grace reveal him to my mind!

Grant what no angel eye has seen and no archon ear (has) heard and what has not entered into the human heart which came to be angelic and (modelled) after the image of the psychic God when it was formed in the beginning, since I have faith and hope. And place upon me your beloved, elect, and blessed greatness, the First-born, the First-begotten, and the [wonderful] mystery of your house; [for] yours is the power and the glory and the praise and the greatness for ever and ever. [Amen.]

Prayer of Paul (the) Apostle.

In Peace.

Christ is holy.
THE APOCRYPHON OF JAMES (I,2)

Introduced and translated by
FRANCIS E. WILLIAMS

_The Apocryphon of James_ is a pseudonymous work translated from Greek to Coptic, which professes to be a letter written by James, the Lord’s brother; the alleged recipient’s name is illegible but might have been that of the early Christian heterodox teacher, Cerinthus. The letter in turn introduces a secret writing, or “apocryphon” — hence our title for the entire tractate. This apocryphon is meant for an elect few — even among the disciples, for James and Peter only — but salvation is promised to those who receive its message.

“James’” letter states that the apocryphon is written in the Hebrew alphabet, and mentions another even more secret apocryphon, which James has already sent. These details are presumably inserted for the sake of atmosphere.

The apocryphon, which comprises the bulk of our tractate, makes Jesus appear to the disciples 550 days after the resurrection, take Peter and James aside to “fill” them, and give them, in a series of speeches, his final and definitive teaching, heretofore delivered only “in parables.” He then ascends to the Father’s right hand, with James and Peter unsuccessfully attempting to follow. This closes the apocryphon; the letter now resumes, and states that the revelation just given was meant, not for the disciples of Jesus, but for the “children” who would be “born” later. While the disciples believed the revelation, they were angry over these later children, and James therefore dispatched them to other places. This, presumably, is meant to explain why our tractate formed no part of the apostolic preaching (or the canonical scripture?).

Jesus’ speeches in the apocryphon are partly the author’s composition, but incorporate older material, which seems to be the product of complex oral and perhaps written transmission; some of it can be compared with the material underlying the canonical gospels. The speeches show Jesus announcing that he has descended to save God’s “beloved” sons, and inviting them to follow him back to the place from which he (and they?) came. He assures them of salvation in the strongest terms, while at the same time urging them to earnestness and zeal, and warning them that they can be lost. The first and longest of the speeches, however, is a two-page exhortation to martyrdom. Its distinctive style, manner, and subject matter suggest that it may be a later interpolation.

It is clear that the persons for whom this tractate was written made a distinction between themselves and the larger Christian church. Probably they rejected the doctrine of the atonement; they certainly ignored the second coming of Christ and the general resurrection, and hoped to ascend, in soul or spirit, to the kingdom of heaven, which they meanwhile felt to be within themselves. This outlook, together with the large amount of typically gnostic terminology in the tractate, has led most investigators to conclude that the work is Christian Gnostic, even though it lacks the Valentinian, and other well-known gnostic theolog-
ologies. The reporting of a special postresurrection appearance of Jesus, and the appeal to James as a source of secret and superior tradition, are means Gnostics often used to legitimate their message.

The exhortation to martyrdom, James' letter, and the description of Jesus' appearance to the disciples, may be secondary; these and other questions relating to the document's literary history have been investigated and deserve further investigation. It has been urged that the tractate must have been written before 150 C.E., while it was still possible to speak of "remembering" orally delivered sayings of Jesus and writing them down; this language, it is argued, would not have been used after the fixing of the Gospel canon. The apocryphon's many resemblances to the Fourth Gospel's "farewell discourses" might also help to establish its date. To use these as a criterion, however, one must decide whether they are allusions to the actual text of the Fourth Gospel, or independent discussions of the same questions. In any case the tractate cannot be later than 314 C.E., when the persecution of the church, and with it the risk of martyrdom, came to an end.

THE APOCRYPHON OF JAMES

I 1, 1-16, 30


Since you asked that I send you a secret book which was revealed to me and Peter by the Lord, I could not turn you away or gainsay (?) you; but [I have written] it in the Hebrew alphabet and sent it to you, and you alone. But since you are a minister of the salvation of the saints, endeavor earnestly and take care not to rehearse this text to many — this that the Savior did not wish to tell to all of us, his twelve disciples. But blessed will they be who will be saved through the faith of this discourse.

I also sent you, ten months ago, another secret book which the Savior had revealed to me. Under the circumstances, however, regard that one as revealed to me, James; but this one [untranslatable fragments] the twelve disciples [were] all sitting together and recalling what the Savior had said to each one of them, whether in secret or openly, and [putting it] in books — [But I] was writing that which was in my book — lo, the Savior appeared, after departing from us while we gazed after him. And five hundred and fifty days since he had risen from the dead, we said to him, "Have you departed and removed yourself from us?"
But Jesus said, "No, but I shall go to the place from whence I came. If you wish to come with me, come!"

They all answered and said, "If you bid us, we come."

He said, "Verily I say unto you, no one will ever enter the kingdom of heaven at my bidding, but (only) because you yourselves are full. Leave James and Peter to me that I may fill them." And having called these two, he drew them aside and bade the rest occupy themselves with that which they were about.

The Savior said, "You have received mercy... Do you not, then, desire to be filled? And your heart is drunken; do you not, then, desire to be sober? Therefore, be ashamed! Henceforth, waking or sleeping, remember that you have seen the Son of Man, and spoken with him in person, and listened to him in person. Woe to those who have seen the Son [of] Man; blessed will they be who have not seen the man, and they who have not consorted with him, and they who have not spoken with him, and they who have not listened to anything from him; yours is life! Know, then, that he healed you when you were ill that you might reign. Woe to those who have found relief from their illness, for they will relapse into illness. Blessed are they who have not been ill, and have known relief before falling ill; yours is the kingdom of God. Therefore, I say to you, 'Become full and leave no space within you empty, for he who is coming can mock you.'"

Then Peter replied, "Lo, three times you have told us, 'Become full'; but we are full."

The Savior answered and said, "For this cause I have said to you, 'Become full,' that you may not be in want. They who are in want, however, will not be saved. For it is good to be full, and bad to be in want. Hence, just as it is good that you (sg.) be in want and, conversely, bad that you be full, so he who is full is in want, and he who is in want does not become full as he who is in want becomes full, and he who has been filled, in turn, attains due perfection. Therefore, you must be in want while it is possible to fill you (pl.), and be full while it is possible for you to be in want, so that you may be able [to fill] yourselves the more. Hence become full of the Spirit, but be in want of reason, for reason (belongs to) the soul; in turn it is (of the nature of) soul."

But I answered and said to him, "Lord, we can obey you if you wish, for we have forsaken our fathers and our mothers and our villages and followed you. Grant us, therefore, not to be tempted by the devil, the evil one."
The Lord answered and said, "What is your (pl.) merit if you do the will of the Father and it is not given to you from him as a gift while you are tempted by Satan? But if you (pl.) are oppressed by Satan and persecuted and you do his (i.e. the Father’s) will, I [say] that he will love you, and make you equal with me, and reckon [you] to have become beloved through his providence by your own choice. So will you not cease loving the flesh and being afraid of sufferings? Or do you not know that you have yet to be abused and to be accused unjustly; and have yet to be shut up in prison, and condemned unlawfully, and crucified (without) reason, and buried (shamefully), as (was) I myself, by the evil one? Do you dare to spare the flesh, you for whom the Spirit is an encircling wall? If you consider how long the world existed (before) you, and how long it will exist after you, you will find that your life is one single day and your sufferings one single hour. For the good will not enter into the world. Scorn death, therefore, and take thought for life! Remember my cross and my death, and you will live!"

But I answered and said to him, "Lord, do not mention to us the cross and death, for they are far from you."

The Lord answered and said, "Verily I say unto you, none will be saved unless they believe in my cross. But those who have believed in my cross, theirs is the kingdom of God. Therefore, become seekers for death, like the dead who seek for life; for that which they seek is revealed to them. And what is there to trouble them? As for you, when you examine death, it will teach you election. Verily I say unto you, none of those who fear death will be saved; for the kingdom (of God) belongs to those who put themselves to death. Become better than I; make yourselves like the son of the Holy Spirit!"

Then I asked him, "Lord, how shall we be able to prophesy to those who request us to prophesy to them? For there are many who ask us, and look to us to hear an oracle from us."

The Lord answered and said, "Do you not know that the head of prophecy was cut off with John?"

But I said, "Lord, can it be possible to remove the head of prophecy?"

The Lord said to me, "When you (pl.) come to know what ‘head’ means, and that prophecy issues from the head, (then) understand the meaning of ‘Its head was removed.’ At first I spoke to you (pl.) in parables and you did not understand; now I speak to you openly, and you (still) do not perceive. Yet it was you who served me as a
parable in parables, and as that which is open in the (words) that are open.

"Hasten to be saved without being urged! Instead, be eager of your own accord and, if possible, arrive even before me; for thus the Father will love you.

"Come to hate hypocrisy and the evil thought; for it is the thought that gives birth to hypocrisy; but hypocrisy is far from truth.

"Do not allow the kingdom of heaven to wither; for it is like a palm shoot whose fruit has dropped down around it. They (i.e., the fallen fruit) put forth leaves, and after they had sprouted, they caused their womb to dry up. So it is also with the fruit which had grown from this single root; when it had been picked (?), fruit was borne by many (?). It (the root) was certainly good, (and) if it were possible for you to produce the new plants now, would find it.

"Since I have already been glorified in this fashion, why do you (pl.) hold me back in my eagerness to go? For after the labor, you have compelled me to stay with you another eighteen days for the sake of the parables. It was enough for some (to listen) to the teaching and understand 'The Shepherds' and 'The Seed' and 'The Building' and 'The Lamps of the Virgins' and 'The Wage of the Workmen' and 'The Didrachmae' and 'The Woman.'

"Become earnest about the word! For as to the word, its first part is faith; the second, love; the third, works; for from these comes life. For the word is like a grain of wheat; when someone had sown it, he had faith in it; and when it had sprouted, he loved it because he had seen many grains in place of one. And when he had worked, he was saved because he had prepared it for food, (and) again he left (some) to sow. So also can you yourselves receive the kingdom of heaven; unless you receive this through knowledge, you will not be able to find it.

"Therefore, I say to you, be sober; do not be deceived! And many times have I said to you all together, and also to you alone, James, have I said, 'Be saved!' And I have commanded you (sg.) to follow me, and I have taught you what to say before the archons. Observe that I have descended and have spoken and undergone tribulation and carried off my crown after saving you (pl.). For I came down to dwell with you (pl.) so that you (pl.) in turn might dwell with me. And, finding your houses unceiled, I have made my abode in the houses that could receive me at the time of my descent.

"Therefore, trust in me, my brethren; understand what the great
light is. The Father has no need of me, – for a father does not need a son, but it is the son who needs the father – though I go to him. For the Father of the Son has no need of you.

"Hearken to the word; understand knowledge; love life, and no one will persecute you, nor will anyone oppress you, other than you yourselves.

"O you wretches; O you unfortunates; O you pretenders to the truth; O you falsifiers of knowledge; O you sinners against the Spirit: can you still bear to listen, when it behooved you to speak from the first? Can you still bear to sleep, when it behooved you to be awake from the first, so that the kingdom of heaven might receive you?

Verily I say unto you, it is easier for a pure one to fall into defilement, and for a man of light to fall into darkness, than for you to reign or not reign.

"I have remembered your tears and your mourning and your anguish, (while you say) ‘They are far behind us.’ But now, you who are outside of the Father’s inheritance, weep where it is necessary and mourn and preach what is good, as the Son is ascending as he should. Verily I say unto you, had I been sent to those who listen to me, and had I spoken with them, I would never have come down to earth. So, then, be ashamed for these things.

"Behold, I shall depart from you and go away, and do not wish to remain with you any longer, just as you yourselves have not wished it. Now, therefore, follow me quickly. This is why I say unto you, ‘for your sakes I came down.’ You are the beloved; you are they who will be the cause of life in many. Invoke the Father, implore God often, and he will give to you. Blessed is he who has seen you with Him when He was proclaimed among the angels, and glorified among the saints; yours (pi.) is life. Rejoice and be glad as sons of God. Keep his will that you may be saved; accept reproof from me and save yourselves. I intercede on your behalf with the Father, and he will forgive you much."

And when we had heard these words, we became glad, for we had been grieving at the words we have mentioned before. But when he saw us rejoicing, he said, "Woe to you (pl.) who lack an advocate! Woe to you, who stand in need of grace! Blessed will they be who have spoken out and obtained grace for themselves. Liken yourselves to foreigners; of what sort are they in the eyes of your city? Why are you disturbed when you cast yourselves away of your own accord and separate yourselves from your city? Why do you abandon
your dwelling place of your own accord, making it ready for those who want to dwell in it? O you outcasts and fugitives, woe to you, for you will be caught! Or do you perhaps think that the Father is a lover of mankind, or that he is won over without prayers, or that he grants remission to one on another's behalf, or that he bears with one who asks? - For he knows the desire and also what it is that the flesh needs! - (Or do you think) that it is not this (flesh) that desires the soul? For without the soul the body does not sin, just as the soul is not saved without [the] spirit. But if the soul is saved (when it is) without evil, and the spirit is also saved, then the body becomes free from sin. For it is the spirit that raises the soul, but the body that kills it; that is, it is it (the soul) which kills itself. Verily I say unto you, he will not forgive the soul the sin by any means, nor the flesh the guilt; for none of those who have worn the flesh will be saved. For do you think that many have found the kingdom of heaven? Blessed is he who has seen himself as a fourth one in heaven!"

When we heard these words, we were distressed. But when he saw that we were distressed, he said, "For this cause I tell you this, that you may know yourselves. For the kingdom of heaven is like an ear of grain after it had sprouted in a field. And when it had ripened, it scattered its fruit and again filled the field with ears for another year. You also, hasten to reap an ear of life for yourselves that you may be filled with the kingdom!"

"And as long as I am with you, give heed to me and obey me; but when I depart from you, remember me. And remember me because when I was with you, you did not know me. Blessed will they be who have known me; woe to those who have heard and have not believed! Blessed will they be who ascend to the Father! Once more I reprove you, you who are; become like those who are not, that you may be with those who are not.

"Do not make the kingdom of heaven a desert within you. Do not be proud because of the light that illumines, but be to yourselves"
as I myself am to you. For your sakes I have placed myself under the curse, that you may be saved."

But Peter replied to these words and said, "Sometimes you urge us on to the kingdom of heaven, and then again you turn us back, Lord; sometimes you persuade and draw us to faith and promise us life, and then again you cast us forth from the kingdom of heaven."

But the Lord answered and said to us, "I have given you faith many times; moreover, I have revealed myself to you (sg.), James, and you (pl.) have not known me. Now again I see you (pl.) rejoicing many times; and when you are elated at the promise of life, are you yet sad, and do you grieve, when you are instructed in the kingdom? But you, through faith and knowledge, have received life. Therefore, disdain the rejection when you hear it, but when you hear the promise, rejoice the more. Verily I say unto you, he who will receive life and believe in the kingdom will never leave it, not even if the Father wishes to banish him.

"These are the things that I shall tell you so far; now, however, I shall ascend to the place from whence I came. But you, when I was eager to go, have cast me out, and instead of accompanying me, you have pursued me. But pay heed to the glory that awaits me, and, having opened your heart, listen to the hymns that await me up in the heavens; for today I must take (my place at) the right hand of the Father. But I have said (my) last word to you, and I shall depart from you, for a chariot of spirit has borne me aloft, and from this moment on I shall strip myself that I may clothe myself. But give heed; blessed are they who have proclaimed the Son before his descent that, when I have come, I might ascend (again). Thrice blessed are they who [were] proclaimed by the Son before they came to be, that you might have a portion among them."

Having said these words, he departed. But we bent (our) knee(s), I and Peter, and gave thanks and sent our heart(s) upwards to heaven. We heard with our ears, and saw with our eyes, the noise of wars and a trumpet blare and a great turmoil.

And when we had passed beyond that place, we sent our mind(s) farther upwards and saw with our eyes and heard with our ears hymns and angelic benedictions and angelic rejoicing. And heavenly majesties were singing praise, and we too rejoiced.

After this again, we wished to send our spirit upward to the Majesty, and after ascending we were not permitted to see or hear anything, for the other disciples called us and asked us, "What did
you (pl.) hear from the Master? And what has he said to you? And where did he go?"

But we answered them, "He has ascended and has given us a pledge and promised life to us all and revealed to us children (?) who are to come after us, after bidding love them, as we would be [saved] for their sakes."

And when they heard (this), they indeed believed the revelation, but were displeased about those to be born. And so, not wishing to give them offense, I sent each one to another place. But I myself went up to Jerusalem, praying that I might obtain a portion among the beloved, who will be made manifest.

And I pray that the beginning may come from you, for thus I shall be capable of salvation, since they will be enlightened through me, by my faith — and through another (faith) that is better than mine, for I would that mine be the lesser. Endeavor earnestly, then, to make yourself like them and pray that you may obtain a portion with them. For because of what I have said, the Savior did not make the revelation to us for their sakes. We do, indeed, proclaim a portion with those for whom the proclamation was made, those whom the Lord has made his sons.
THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH (I, 3 AND XII, 2)

Introduced and translated by

HAROLD W. ATTRIDGE and GEORGE W. MACRAE

*The Gospel of Truth* is a Christian Gnostic text with clear affinities to the Valentinian school, offering a subtle yet moving reflection on the person and work of Jesus. The tractate has no explicit title in the manuscript and is known by its *incipit*. Many other works in antiquity, such as the "gospel" of Mark and the "revelation" of John, were similarly identified by their opening words. A Valentinian work entitled the "Gospel of Truth" is attested in the *Adversus Haereses* (3.11.9) of Irenaeus. Unfortunately the heresiologist reveals little about the content of the work, except that it differed significantly from the canonical gospels. Given the general Valentinian affinities of the text of Codex I, it is quite possible that it is identical with the work known to Irenaeus. If so, a date of composition in the middle of the second century (between 140 and 180 C.E.) would be established. On the basis of literary and conceptual affinities between this text and the exiguous fragments of Valentinus, some scholars have suggested that the Gnostic teacher himself was the author. That remains a distinct possibility, although it cannot be definitively established. Whatever its precise date and authorship, the work was certainly composed in Greek in an elaborate rhetorical style, by a consummate literary artist.

Despite its title, this work is not a gospel of the sort found in the New Testament, since it does not offer a continuous narration of the deeds, teachings, passion, and resurrection of Jesus. The term "gospel" in the *incipit* preserves its early sense of "good news." It defines the text's subject, not its genre, which is best understood as a homily. Like other early Christian homilies, such as the Epistle to the Hebrews, *The Gospel of Truth* alternates doctrinal exposition with paroemenia (e.g., 32, 31-33, 32) and, like that canonical work, it reflects on the significance of the salvific work of Jesus from a special theological perspective.

Identification of the work as a homily says little about its literary or theological dynamics. Analysis of both surface structure and underlying conceptual scheme is made difficult by the elusive character of the discourse, which combines allusions to familiar elements of early Christian tradition, sometimes in unusual associations, with references to less familiar notions. Similarly elusive is the frame of reference of the text, which seems to slip quite easily from cosmic to historical, then to personal or psychological perspectives. These qualities of the work may indicate something of its intended function. Traditions familiar from the New Testament are given a new meaning by being set in a conceptual environment, the structure of which remains artfully obscured. Nonetheless, certain key themes and perspectives characteristic of Valentinian theology, such as the principle that knowledge of the Father destroys ignorance (18, 10-11; 24, 30-32), are emphasized. The work was thus probably designed to introduce Valentinian soteriological insights to members of the great church.
The work is divided into three large blocks of exposition separated by two formally distinct units, a festive "Litany on the Word" (23,18-24,9) and a par-aenetic appeal (32,31-33,32). Each of the three blocks of exposition also contains three thematically distinct sections. After an introduction (16,31-17,4), the first block begins with a description of the generation of Error (17,4-18,11), which comes forth from the Father, but for which the Father is not responsible, and by which he is not diminished. A mythological account, like that of the fall of Sophia, found in many gnostic texts (c.f., e.g., The Hypostasis of the Archons or On the Origin of the World), no doubt underlies this description of Error. The text then (18,11-19,27) turns to Jesus and his work as revealer and teacher. To illustrate the last notion, the text appeals to traditions like that of Jesus in the temple in Luke 2, although the allusion may be to noncanonical accounts of the youth of Jesus. The final segment of the first block (19,27-24,9) mentions, without any docetic qualifications, the death of Jesus (20,25), then interprets that event, with images drawn from Colossians and the Apocalypse, as an act of revelation. That act reveals the essence of the Father and the origin and destiny of the human self in Him. Through that insight the powers of Error are overcome.

The second major block of exposition (24,9-33,32) describes the effects of the revelation of the "gospel of truth." It produces unity with the Father (24,9-27,7). It makes possible authentic human existence, imaged in traditional gnostic terms as a state of wakefulness (27,7-30,16), a condition of joy and delight graphically contrasted with the nightmarish existence of those in ignorance. Finally the revelation opens the way to ultimate return to the Father (30,16-32,30).

The final block of exposition focuses on the process of reintegration to the primordial source. The return begins (33,33-36,39) as gentle attraction, imaged as an alluring perfume. That attractive fragrance is in fact the spirit of incorruptibility which produces forgiveness. The agent of the return (36,39-40,23) is the Son, who is the name of the Father. The identification of Son and Name involves the most subtle of the reflections of the text (38,6-40,23), combining ancient Jewish-Christian exaltation patterns with philosophical semantics. The final portion of the text (40,23-41,14) describes in festive terms the ultimate goal of the process of return, rest in the Father. Those who recognize that their destiny is in the source from which they have come are the children whom the Father loves.

The Gospel of Truth's combination of literary and conceptual sophistication with genuine religious feeling suggests much better than the rather dry accounts of gnostic systems in the heresiologists why the teaching of Valentinus and his school had such an appeal for many Christians of the second century.

The following translation is based on the text of Codex I; the text of Codex XII is very fragmentary.
The gospel of truth is joy for those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him, through the power of the Word that came forth from the pleroma, the one who is in the thought and the mind of the Father, that is, the one who is addressed as the Savior, (that) being the name of the work he is to perform for the redemption of those who were ignorant of the Father, while in the name [of] the gospel is the proclamation of hope, being discovery for those who search for him.

When the totality went about searching for the one from whom they had come forth — and the totality was inside of him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one who is superior to every thought — ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror; and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see. For this reason error became powerful; it worked on its own matter foolishly, not having known the truth. It set about with a creation, preparing with power and beauty the substitute for the truth.

This was not, then, a humiliation for him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one, for they were nothing, the anguish and the oblivion and the creature of deceit, while the established truth is immutable, imperturbable, perfect in beauty. For this reason, despise error.

Thus it had no root; it fell into a fog regarding the Father, while it was involved in preparing works and oblivions and terrors, in order that by means of these it might entice those of the middle and capture them.

The oblivion of error was not revealed. It is not a [ ] from the Father. Oblivion did not come into existence from the Father, although it did indeed come into existence because of him. But what comes into existence in him is knowledge, which appeared in order that oblivion might vanish and the Father might be known. Since oblivion came into existence because the Father was not known, then if the Father comes to be known, oblivion will not exist from that moment on.

Through this, the gospel of the one who is searched for, which was revealed to those who are perfect through the mercies of the Father, the hidden mystery, Jesus, the Christ, enlightened those who were in darkness through oblivion. He enlightened them; he showed
(them) a way; and the way is the truth which he taught them.

For this reason error grew angry at him, persecuted him, was distressed at him (and) was brought to naught. He was nailed to a tree (and) he became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father. It did not, however, cause destruction because it was eaten, but to those who ate it it gave (cause) to become glad in the discovery, and he discovered them in himself, and they discovered him in themselves.

As for the incomprehensible, inconceivable one, the Father, the perfect one, the one who made the totality, within him is the totality and of him the totality has need. Although he retained their perfection within himself which he did not give to the totality, the Father was not jealous. What jealousy indeed (could there be) between himself and his members? For, if this aeon had thus received their perfection, they could not have come to the Father. He retains within himself their perfection, granting it to them as a return to him and a perfectly unitary knowledge. It is he who fashioned the totality, and within him is the totality and the totality was in need of him.

As in the case of a person of whom some are ignorant, he wishes to have them know him and love him, so for what did the totality have need of if not knowledge regarding the Father? — he became a guide, restful and leisurely. In schools he appeared (and) he spoke the word as a teacher. There came the men wise in their own estimation, putting him to the test. But he confounded them because they were foolish. They hated him because they were not really wise.

After all these, there came the little children also, those to whom the knowledge of the Father belongs. Having been strengthened, they learned about the impressions of the Father. They knew, they were known; they were glorified, they glorified. There was manifested in their heart the living book of the living — the one written in the thought and the mind of the Father, which from before the foundation of the totality was within his incomprehensibility — that book which no one was able to take, since it remains for the one who will take it to be slain. No one could have become manifest from among those who have believed in salvation unless that book had appeared. For this reason the merciful one, the faithful one, Jesus, was patient in accepting sufferings until he took that book, since he knows that his death is life for many.

Just as there lies hidden in a will, before it is opened, the fortune of the deceased master of the house, so (it is) with the totality, which lay hidden while the Father of the totality was invisible, being some-
thing which is 1 from him, from whom 1 every space comes forth. 1 For this reason Jesus appeared; 1 he put on that book; 25 he was nailed to a tree; 1 he published the edict 1 of the Father on the cross. O 1 such great teaching! He draws 1 himself down to death though life 30 eternal clothes him. Having stripped 1 himself of the perishable rags, 1 he put on imperishability, 1 which no one 1 can possibly take away from him. Having entered 35 the empty spaces of 1 terrors, he passed through 1 those who were stripped naked by 1 oblivion, being knowledge 1 and perfection, proclaiming the things that are in the heart, 21 [...] 1 teach those who will receive teaching. 1

But those who are to receive teaching [are] 1 the living who are inscribed in the book 5 of the living. It is about themselves that they receive instruction, 1 receiving it 1 from the Father, turning 1 again to him. Since the 1 perfection of the totality is in the Father, 10 it is necessary for the totality to 1 ascend to him. Then, if 1 one has knowledge, he receives what are 1 his own and draws 1 them to himself. For he who is 15 ignorant is in need, and 1 what he lacks is great, 1 since he lacks that which will 1 make him perfect. Since the perfection of 1 the totality is in the Father 20 and it is necessary for the totality to 1 ascend to him and for each 1 one to receive what are his own, 1 he enrolled them in advance, having 1 prepared them to give to those 25 who came forth from him.

Those 1 whose name he knew in advance 1 were called at the end, 1 so that one who has knowledge is 1 the one whose name the Father 30 has uttered. For he whose name 1 has not been spoken is ignorant. 1 Indeed, how is one 1 to hear if his name has not 1 been called? For he who is 35 ignorant until the end is a creature 1 of oblivion, and he will 1 vanish along with it. If not, 1 how is it that these miserable ones have 22 no name, (how is it that) they do not have 1 the call? Therefore, 1 if one has knowledge, he is 1 from above. If he is called, 5 he hears, he answers, 1 and he turns to him who is calling 1 him, and ascends to him. And 1 he knows in what manner he 1 is called. Having knowledge, he does 10 the will of the one who called 1 him, he wishes to be pleasing to him, he 1 receives rest. Each one's name 1 comes to him. He who is to have knowledge 1 in this manner knows where he comes 15 from and where he is going. 1 He knows as one 1 who having become drunk has turned away from 1 his drunkenness, (and) having returned to himself, 1 has set right what 20 are his own.

He has brought many 1 back from error. He has gone 1 before them to their places, 1 from which they had moved away, 1 since it was on ac-
count 25 of the depth that they received error, the depth of the one who encircles 1 all spaces while there is none 1 that encircles him. It was a great 1 wonder that they were in the Father, 1 not knowing him, and (that) they were 30 able to come forth by themselves, 1 since they were unable to 1 comprehend or to know the one 1 in whom they were. For if 1 his will had not thus emerged from him – 35 for he revealed it 1 in view of a knowledge in which 1 all its emanations concur. 1

This is the knowledge of 1 the living book which he revealed to the 23 aeons, at the end, as [his letters], 1 revealing how 1 they are not vowels 1 nor are they 5 consonants, 1 so that one might read them and 1 think of something foolish, 1 but they are letters of the 1 truth which they alone speak 10 who know them. 1 Each letter is a complete 1 thought 1 like a complete 1 book, since they are 1 letters written by 15 the Unity, the Father having 1 written them for the aeons in order that by 1 means of his letters 1 they should know the Father.

While his wisdom 1 contemplates 20 the Word, and his teaching 1 utters it, his knowledge 1 has revealed 1 it. 1 While forebearance is 1 a crown upon it, 25 and his gladness is in harmony 1 with it, his glory 1 has exalted it, his image 1 has revealed it, 1 his repose has 30 received it into itself, his love 1 has made a body over it, 1 his fidelity has embraced 1 it. In this way the Word 1 of the Father goes 35 forth in the totality, as the fruit 24 of his heart and 1 an impression of his will. 1 But it supports the totality; it 1 chooses them and also receives 5 the impression of the totality, 1 purifying them, bringing them back 1 into the Father, into the Mother, 1 Jesus of the infinite 1 sweetness.

The Father reveals 10 his bosom. – Now his bosom 1 is the Holy Spirit. – He 1 reveals what is hidden of him – 1 what is hidden of him is 1 his Son – so that through 15 the mercies of the Father 1 the aeons may know him 1 and cease laboring in search of 1 the Father, resting there 1 in him, knowing 20 that this is the rest. Having 1 filled the deficiency, he abolished 1 the form – the form of 1 it is the world, that 1 in which he served. – 25 For the place where there is envy 1 and strife is deficient, 1 but the place where (there is) Unity 1 is perfect. Since the deficiency 1 came into being because the 30 Father was not known, therefore, when 1 the Father is known, 1 from that moment on the deficiency will no longer exist. As 1 in the case of the ignorance 1 of a person, when he comes 35 to have knowledge, his ignorance 1 vanishes of itself, 1 as the darkness vanishes 1 when light appears, 25 so also 1 the deficiency vanishes 1 in the perfection. So 1 from that moment on the form is not apparent, 5 but it will vanish 1 in the fusion of Unity, 1 for now their works
lie scattered. In time Unity will perfect the spaces. It is within Unity that each one will attain himself; within knowledge he will purify himself from multiplicity into Unity, consuming matter within himself like fire, and darkness by light, death by life.

If indeed these things have happened to each one of us, then we must see to it above all that the house will be holy and silent for the Unity. (It is) as in the case of some people who moved out of dwellings having jars that in spots were not good. They would break them, and the master of the house would not suffer loss. Rather (he) is glad because in place of the bad jars (there are) full ones which are made perfect. For such is the judgment which has come from above. It has passed judgment on everyone; it is a drawn sword, with two edges, cutting on either side. When the Word appeared, the one that is within the heart of those who utter it — it is not a sound alone but it became a body — a great disturbance took place among the jars because some had been emptied, others filled; that is, some had been supplied, others poured out, some had been purified, still others broken up. All the spaces were shaken and disturbed because they had no order nor stability. Error was upset, not knowing what to do; it was grieved, in mourning, afflicting itself because it knew nothing. When knowledge drew near it — this is the downfall of (error) and all its emanations — error is empty, having nothing inside.

Truth appeared; all its emanations knew it. They greeted the Father in truth with a perfect power that joins them with the Father. For, as for everyone who loves the truth — because the truth is the mouth of the Father; his tongue is the Holy Spirit — he who is joined to the truth is joined to the Father’s mouth by his tongue, whenever he is to receive the Holy Spirit, since this is the manifestation of the Father and his revelation to his aeons.

He manifested what was hidden of him; he explained it. For who contains, if not the Father alone? All the spaces are his emanations. They have known that they came forth from him like children who are from a grown man. They knew that they had not yet received form nor yet received a name, each one of which the Father begets. Then, when they receive form by his knowledge, though truly within him, they do not know him. But the Father is perfect, knowing every space within him. If he wishes, he manifests whomever he wishes by giving him form and giving him a name, and he gives a name to him and brings it about that those come into existence who,
before they come into existence, are ignorant of him who fashioned them.

I do not say, then, that they are nothing (at all) who have not yet come into existence, but they are in him who will wish that they come into existence when he wishes, like the time that is to come. Before all things appear, he knows what he will produce. But the fruit which is not yet manifest does not know anything, nor does it do anything. Thus, also, every space which is itself in the Father is from the one who exists, who established it from what does not exist. For he who has no root has no fruit either, but though he thinks to himself, "I have come into being," yet he will perish by himself. For this reason, he who did not exist at all will never come into existence. What, then, did he wish him to think of himself? This: "I have come into being like the shadows and phantoms of the night." When the light shines on the terror which that person had experienced, he knows that it is nothing.

Thus they were ignorant of the Father, he being the one whom they did not see. Since it was terror and disturbance and instability and doubt and division, there were many illusions at work by means of these, and (there were) empty fictions, as if they were sunk in sleep and found themselves in disturbing dreams. Either (there is) a place to which they are fleeing, or without strength they come (from) having chased after others, or they are involved in striking blows, or they are receiving blows themselves, or they have fallen from high places, or they take off into the air though they do not even have wings. Again, sometimes (it is as) if people were murdering them, though there is no one even pursuing them, or they themselves are killing their neighbors, for they have been stained with their blood. When those who are going through all these things wake up, they see nothing, they who were in the midst of all these disturbances, for they are nothing. Such is the way of those who have cast ignorance aside from them like sleep, not esteeming it as anything, nor do they esteem its works as solid things either, but they leave them behind like a dream in the night. The knowledge of the Father they value as the dawn. This is the way each one has acted, as though asleep at the time when he was ignorant. And this is the way he has come to knowledge, as if he had awakened. Good for the man who will return and awaken. And blessed is he who has opened the eyes of the blind.

And the Spirit ran after him, hastening from waking him up.
Having extended his hand 20 to him who lay upon the 1 ground, he set him up 1 on his feet, for 1 he had not yet risen. 1 He gave them the means of knowing 25 the knowledge of the Father and the 1 revelation of his Son. 1 For, when they had seen him and had 1 heard him, he granted them to 1 taste him and 30 to smell him and 1 to touch the 1 beloved Son.

When he had appeared 1 instructing them about the Father, 1 the incomprehensible one, when he had breathed into them 35 what is in the thought, doing 1 his will, when many had 1 received the light, they turned 31 to him. For the material ones were strangers 1 and did not see his likeness 1 and had not known 1 him. For he came 5 by means of fleshly 1 form, while nothing blocked 1 his course because 1 incorruptibility is irresistible, 1 since he, again, spoke 10 new things, still speaking about 1 what is in the heart of the Father, having 1 brought forth the flawless word.

When light had spoken 1 through his mouth, 15 as well as his voice 1 which gave birth to life, he 1 gave them thought and understanding 1 and mercy and salvation and the powerful spirit 1 from the infiniteness 20 and the sweetness of the Father. 1 Having made punishments 1 and tortures cease — for it was they which 1 were leading astray from his face some 1 who were in need of mercy, in 25 error and in bonds — 1 he both destroyed them with power 1 and confounded them with knowledge. 1 He became a 1 way for those who were gone astray 30 and knowledge for those who were 1 ignorant, a discovery for those 1 who were searching, and a support 1 for those who were wavering, 1 immaculateness for those who 35 were defiled.

He is the shepherd 1 who left behind the ninety- 32 nine sheep which were not lost. 1 He went searching for the one which 1 had gone astray. He rejoiced when he 1 found it, for ninety-nine 5 is a number that is in the left hand 1 which holds it. But 1 when the one is found, 1 the entire number 1 passes to the right (hand). As 10 that which lacks the one — that is, 1 the entire right (hand) — 1 draws what was deficient and 1 takes it from the 1 left-hand side and brings (it) to the 15 right, so too the number 1 becomes one hundred. It is the sign of the one who is in 1 their sound; it is the Father. 1 Even on the Sabbath, he labored for the sheep 1 which he found fallen into the 20 pit. He gave life to 1 the sheep, having brought it up 1 from the pit in order that you 1 might know interiorly — 38 you, the sons of interior 39 knowledge — 1 what is the Sabbath, on which it is not fitting 25 for salvation to be idle, 1 in order that you may speak 1 from the day from above, 1 which has no night, 1 and from the light 30 which does not sink because it is perfect.
Say, then, from the heart that \(\text{you are the perfect day}\) and in you dwells \(\text{the light that does not fail}\). \(\text{Speak of the truth with those who search for it and (of) knowledge to those who have committed sin in their error}.\) \(\text{Make firm the foot of those who have stumbled and stretch out your hands to those who are ill}.\) \(\text{Feed those who are hungry and give repose to those who are weary, and raise up those who wish to rise, and awaken those who sleep}.\) \(\text{For you are the understanding that is drawn forth}.\) If \(\text{strength acts thus, it becomes even stronger}.\) \(\text{Be concerned with yourselves; do not be concerned with other things which you have rejected from yourselves}.\) \(\text{Do not return to what you have vomited to eat it. Do not be moths. Do not be worms, for you have already cast it off. Do not become a dwelling place for the devil, for you have already destroyed him}.\) \(\text{Do not strengthen (those who are) obstacles to you who are collapsing, as though (you were) a support (for them)}.\) \(\text{For the lawless one is someone to treat ill rather than the just one}.\) \(\text{For the former does his work as a lawless person; the latter as a righteous person does his work among others}.\) \(\text{So you, do the will of the Father, for you are from him}.\)

\(\text{For the Father is sweet and in his will is what is good}.\) \(\text{He has taken cognizance of the things that are yours that you might find rest in them}.\) \(\text{For by the fruits does one take cognizance of the things that are yours because the children of the Father are his fragrance, for they are from the grace of his countenance}.\) \(\text{For this reason the Father loves his fragrance and manifests it in every place, and if it mixes with matter he gives his fragrance to the light and in his repose he causes it to surpass every form (and) every sound}.\) \(\text{For it is not the ears that smell the fragrance, but (it is) the breath that has the sense of smell and attracts the fragrance to itself and is submerged in the fragrance of the Father, so that he thus shelters it and takes it to the place where it came from, from the first fragrance which is grown cold}.\) \(\text{It is something in a psychic form, being like cold water which has frozen (?), which is on earth that is not solid, of which those who see it think it is earth; afterwards it dissolves again. If a breath draws it, it gets hot. The fragrances, therefore, that are cold are from the division}.\) \(\text{For this reason faith came; it dissolved the division, and it brought the warm pleroma of love in order that the cold should not come again but there should be the unity of perfect thought}.\)

\(\text{This is the word of the gospel of the discovery of the pleroma, for those who await the salvation which is coming from on high}.\)
While their hope, for which they are waiting, is in waiting — they whose image is light with no shadow in it — then, at that time, the pleroma is proceeding to come. The deficiency of matter came to be not through the limitlessness of the Father, who is coming to give time for the deficiency, although no one could say that the incorruptable one would come in this way. But the depth of the Father was multiplied and the thought of error did not exist with him. It is a thing that falls, it is a thing that easily stands upright (again) in the discovery of him who has come to him whom he shall bring back. For the bringing back is called repentance.

For this reason incorruptibility breathed forth; it pursued the one who had sinned in order that he might rest. For forgiveness is what remains for the light in the deficiency, the word of the pleroma. For the physician runs to the place where sickness is, because that is the will that is in him. He who has a deficiency, then, does not hide it, because one has what the other lacks. So the pleroma, which has no deficiency, but fills up the deficiency, is what he provided from himself for filling up what he lacks, in order that therefore he might receive the grace. For when he was deficient, he did not have the grace. That is why there was diminution existing in the place where there is no grace. When that which was diminished was received, he revealed what he lacked, being (now) a pleroma; that is the discovery of the light of truth which rose upon him because it is immutable.

That is why Christ was spoken of in their midst, so that those who were disturbed might receive a bringing back, and he might anoint them with the ointment. The ointment is the mercy of the Father who will have mercy on them. But those whom he has anointed are the ones who have become perfect. For full jars are the ones that are usually anointed. But when the anointing of one (jar) is dissolved, it is emptied, and the reason for there being a deficiency is the thing by which its ointment goes. For at that time a breath draws it, a thing in the power of that which is with it. But from him who has no deficiency, no seal is removed nor is anything emptied, but what he lacks the perfect Father fills again. He knows his plantings, because it is he who planted them in his paradise. Now his paradise is his place of rest.

This is the perfection in the thought of the Father, and these are the words of his meditation. Each one of his words is the work of his one will in the revelation of his Word. While they were still depths of his thought, the Word which was first to come forth re-
vealed them along with a mind that speaks, the one Word in silent grace. He was called thought, since they were in it before being revealed. It came about then, that he was first to come forth at the time when the will of him who willed desired it. And the will is what the Father rests in and is pleased with. Nothing happens without him nor does anything happen without the will of the Father, but his will is unsearchable. His trace is the will and no one will know him nor is it possible for one to scrutinize him in order to grasp him. But when he wills, what he wills is this — even if the sight does not please them in any way before God — desiring the Father. For he knows the beginning of all of them and their end. For at their end he will question them directly. Now, the end is receiving knowledge about the one who is hidden, and this is the Father, from whom the beginning came forth, to whom all will return who have come forth from him. And they have appeared for the glory and the joy of his name.

Now the name of the Father is the Son. It is he who first gave a name to the one who came forth from him, who was himself, and he begot him as a son. He gave him his name which belonged to him; he is the one to whom belongs all that exists around him, the Father. His is the name; his is the Son. It is possible for him to be seen. The name, however, is invisible because it alone is the mystery of the invisible which comes to ears that are completely filled by him. For indeed, the Father's name is not spoken, but it is apparent through a Son.

In this way, then, the name is a great thing. Who, therefore, will be able to utter a name for him, the great name, except him alone to whom the name belongs and the sons of the name in whom rested the name of the Father, (who) in turn themselves rested in his name? Since the Father is unengendered, he alone is the one who begot him for him(self) as a name, before he brought forth the aeons, in order that the name of the Father should be over their head as lord, that is the name in truth, which is firm in his command through perfect power. For the name is not from (mere) words, nor does his name consist of appellations, but it is invisible. He gave a name to him alone, since he alone sees him, he alone having the power to give him a name. For he who does not exist has no name. For what name is given to him who does not exist? But the one who exists exists also with his name, and he alone knows it, and alone (knows how) to give him a name. It is the Father. The Son is his name. He
did not, therefore, hide it in the thing, but it existed; as for the Son, he alone gave a name. The name, therefore, is that of the Father, as the name of the Father is the Son. Where indeed would compassion find a name except with the Father?

But no doubt one will say to his neighbor: "Who is it who will give a name to him who existed before himself, as if offspring did not receive a name from those who begot them?" First, then, it is fitting for us to reflect on this matter: What is the name? It is the name in truth; it is not therefore the name from the Father, for it is the one which is the proper name. Therefore, he did not receive the name on loan as (do) others, according to the form in which each one is to be produced. But this is the proper name. There is no one else who gave it to him. But he is unnamable, indescribable, until the time when he who is perfect spoke of him alone. And it is he who has the power to speak his name and to see it.

When, therefore, it pleased him that his name which is loved should be his Son, and he gave the name to him, that is, him who came forth from the depth, he spoke about his secret things, knowing that the Father is a being without evil. For that very reason he brought him forth in order to speak about the place and his resting-place from which he had come forth, and to glorify the pleroma, the greatness of his name and the sweetness of the Father. About the place each one came from he will speak, and to the region where he received his establishment he will hasten to return again and to take from that place — the place where he stood — receiving a taste from that place and receiving nourishment, receiving growth. And his own resting-place is his pleroma.

Therefore, all the emanations of the Father are pleromas, and the root of all his emanations is in the one who made them all grow up in himself. He assigned them their destinies. Each one then is manifest, in order that through their own thought. For the place to which they send their thought, that place, their root, is what takes them up in all the heights to the Father. They possess his head, which is rest for them, and they are supported, approaching him, as though to say that they have participated in his face by means of kisses. But they do not become manifest in this way, for they were not themselves exalted; (yet) neither did they lack the glory of the Father nor did they think of him as small nor that he is harsh nor that he is wrathful, but that he is a being without evil, unperturbable, sweet, knowing all spaces before they have come into existence, and he had no need to be instructed.
This is the manner of those who possess (something) from above of the immensurable greatness, as they wait for the one alone and the perfect one, the one who is there for them. And they do not go down to Hades nor have they envy nor groaning nor death within them, but they rest in him who is at rest, not striving nor being twisted around the truth. But they themselves are the truth; and the Father is within them and they are in the Father, being perfect, being undivided in the truly good one, being in no way deficient in anything, but they are set at rest, refreshed in the Spirit. And they will heed their root. They will be concerned with those (things) in which he will find his root and not suffer loss to his soul. This is the place of the blessed; this is their place.

For the rest, then, may they know, in their places, that it is not fitting for me, having come to be in the resting-place, to speak of anything else. But it is in it that I shall come to be, and (it is fitting) to be concerned at all times with the Father of the all and the true brothers, those upon whom the love of the Father is poured out and in whose midst there is no lack of him. They are the ones who appear in truth, since they exist in true and eternal life and speak of the light which is perfect and filled with the seed of the Father, and which is in his heart and in the pleroma, while his Spirit rejoices in it and glorifies the one in whom it existed because he is good. And his children are perfect and worthy of his name, for he is the Father: it is children of this kind that he loves.
THE TREATISE ON THE RESURRECTION (I,4)

Introduced and translated by
MALCOLM L. PEEL

The importance of this short, eight-page, didactic letter lies in its witness to a distinctively unorthodox interpretation of Christian teaching about survival after death. By the late second century, the probable time of its composition, Christians — whether Gnostic or orthodox — were struggling with certain challenges and questions. Was such survival philosophically demonstrable (as Socrates had argued in the Phaedo)? What form might it take? (Immortality of the soul? Resurrection of the body? Reincarnation?) When would such survival be experienced? (At death? At Christ’s final return? Perhaps even before death?) The New Testament teaching was somewhat ambiguous on several of these points, though within the great church there seemed general agreement on at least two matters: the prototype and basis of hope for such survival was the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of individuals would entail their retention of personal identity.

The anonymous author of The Treatise on the Resurrection, however, claimed a Christ-given knowledge (49,41-50,2) that enabled him to offer direct and unambiguous answers to such questions, questions which in this case had been put to him by his pupil, Rheginos (43,25). First, the resurrection is a matter of faith in the reality of Jesus Christ’s resurrection and his destruction of death (46,14-19). Such cannot be the result of philosophical “persuasion,” and most philosophers of the world are in fact sceptics.

Second, the form of survival will be the “resurrection,” which is not understood as the re-creation of a spiritual body at Christ’s Parousia (cf. 1 Co 15 passim). Rather, at the point of biological death, the “elect” believer experiences the separation of the inward, “living members,” whose intellectual nature is clarified by reference to the “mind” and its “thought,” from the external “body” of “perishable,” “visible,” outward “members” (47,38-48,2; 45,39-46,2; 45,19-21). Even so, this “resurrection body,” covered with a new “flesh” (47,4-8) or “garment of light” (“rays” in 45,30-31), retains personally identifiable features, as the appearance of Elijah and Moses at Christ’s transfiguration (Mk 9:2-8) makes clear. Such is the “spiritual resurrection” which “swallows up” (i.e., renders nonsensical or destroys) the “resurrection” of either the naked “soul” or of the crudely literal “flesh” (45,39-46,2). Implied is a dualistic doctrine of outer/inner that goes beyond Pauline anthropology.

Third, unlike the early church, which in its resurrection hope held to an “eschatological reservation” (i.e., the notion that the full benefit of individual Christians’ participation in the resurrection would wait the final return of Christ), the author of The Treatise on the Resurrection held that for the elect believer who had proleptically participated in Christ’s suffering (death), resurrection, and ascension (45,24-28), the new reality should be clear: one already has
the resurrection in the present. In sum, our author, like the Hymenaeus and Phileltes condemned in 2 Timothy 2:18, teaches that the resurrection has already occurred! He reinforces it by means of a kind of existential proof: the believer who knows of death’s inevitability should consider himself as dead already and thus as already participating in the resurrected state (49,16-30). Thus, the believer is to have “faith” in the reality of Christ’s victory over death and its guarantee (45,14-46, 4,14-17; 46,8-13), to avoid all “doubt” (47,36-48,3), to “know” the “Son of Man” and the truth proclaimed about his resurrection (46,13-17, 30-32), to “practise” one’s release from the inimical power of this cosmos (49,30-33) through correct thought, and to realize the mystical unity between the experience of the Savior and that of the believer (45,15-46,2).

Major studies of the text have clarified that the author is a Christian Gnostic teacher who is clearly influenced by Valentinian Gnosticism. The evidence for this is found in the close parallels between the treatise’s teaching that the spiritual resurrection has already occurred and the reports of Valentinian “realized eschatology” in Tertullian (De praes. haer. 33.7; De res. mort. 19,2-7) and Irenaeus (Haer. 2.31.2). Also, certain conceptual complexes unique to Valentinianism appear in Treat. Res., such as the idea of a primordial pleroma which suffered a devolution and resulting “deficiency” (46,35-47,1; 49,4-5) which the Savior must “restore” (44,30-33).

Only to be expected, then, is the presence of Middle Platonic ideas which, as prior scholarship has shown, influenced Valentinianism. Such ideas include a distinction between a world of being (including the Good itself) and the sphere of becoming and corruption (48,20-27), as well as between an “intelligible world” and a “sensible” world (46,35-47,1). Also Platonic are notions of the pre-existence of souls (46,38-47,1; cf. 47,4-6; 49,30-36) and of “practising” for dying (49,28-33).

Rather un-Platonic, however, is the absence of any mention of an ultimate quest for ecstatic vision/union with the ultimate One, as well as our treatise’s stress on retention of identifiable personal characteristics in the post mortem resurrected state.

Because of the centrality of Jesus Christ in the text, however, and because the author appeals to the New Testament as highest authority for his proofs (cf. 43,34; 45,4, 24-28; 48,6-11), we conclude that the author is a Christian Gnostic whose thought displays the influence of Middle Platonism as filtered through a late and somewhat vaguely articulated Valentinian Gnosticism.

Critical opinion now generally holds that Treat. Res. is not written by Valentinus himself. Studies of the stage of the New Testament canon of which the anonymous author seems aware, of the place of Treat. Res. teaching in the context of debates over the resurrection in the early church, and of the type of Middle Platonic ideas found in it all converge in pointing toward the late second century as the probable time of composition. As to its provenance, neither internal nor external evidence provides any clues.

Debate continues over whether the writing is a genuine didactic letter lacking a praecriptio naming its author (such as are the Epistula Apostolorum or the Letter of Ptolemy to Flora) and incorporating elements of the diatribe style, or whether it is principally a philosophical discourse decisively shaped by the Cynic-Stoic diatribe. As yet, the last named is lacking a convincing demonstration.
Most scholars do seem to reject the suggestions, however, that the text is the result of combining two originally separate letters or that it is the result of a gnostic redaction of an originally Christian text.

THE TREATISE ON THE RESURRECTION

I 43, 25-50, 18

Some there are, my son Rheginos, who want to learn many things. They have this goal when they are occupied with questions whose answer is lacking. If they succeed with these, they usually think very highly of themselves. But I do not think that they have stood within the Word of Truth. They seek rather their own rest, which we have received through our Savior, our Lord Christ. We received it (i.e., Rest) when we came to know the truth and rested ourselves upon it. But since you ask us pleasantly what is proper concerning the resurrection, I am writing you (to say) that it is necessary. To be sure, many are lacking faith in it, but there are a few who find it. So then, let us discuss the matter.

How did the Lord proclaim things while he existed in flesh and after he had revealed himself as Son of God? He lived in this place where you remain, speaking about the Law of Nature — but I call it “Death!” Now the Son of God, Rheginos, was Son of Man. He embraced them both, possessing the humanity and the divinity, so that on the one hand he might vanquish death through his being Son of God, and that on the other through the Son of Man the restoration to the Pleroma might occur; because he was originally from above, a seed of the Truth, before this structure (of the cosmos) had come into being. In this (structure) many dominions and divinities came into existence.

I know that I am presenting the solution in difficult terms, but there is nothing difficult in the Word of Truth. But since the Solution appeared so as not to leave anything hidden, but to reveal all things openly concerning existence — the destruction of evil on the one hand, the revelation of the elect on the other. This (Solution) is the emanation of Truth and Spirit, Grace is of the Truth.

The Savior swallowed up death — (of this) you are not reckoned as being ignorant — for he put aside the world which is perishing. He transformed [himself] into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible, and he gave us
the way of our immortality. Then, indeed, as the Apostle said, "We suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him." Now if we are manifest in this world wearing him, we are that one's beams, and we are embraced by him until our setting, that is to say, our death in this life. We are drawn to heaven by him, like beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything. This is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the psychic in the same way as the fleshly.

But if there is one who does not believe, he does not have the (capacity to be) persuaded. For it is the domain of faith, my son, and not that which belongs to persuasion: the dead shall arise! There is one who believes among the philosophers who are in this world. At least he will arise. And let not the philosopher who is in this world have cause to believe that he is one who returns himself by himself — and (that) because of our faith! For we have known the Son of Man, and we have believed that he rose from among the dead. This is he of whom we say, "He became the destruction of death, as he is a great one in whom they believe." (Great)are those who believe.

The thought of those who are saved shall not perish. The mind of those who have known him shall not perish. Therefore, we are elected to salvation and redemption since we are predestined from the beginning not to fall into the foolishness of those who are without knowledge, but we shall enter into the wisdom of those who have known the Truth. Indeed, the Truth which is kept cannot be abandoned, nor has it been. "Strong is the system of the Pleroma; small is that which broke loose and became (the) world. But the All is what is encompassed. It has not come into being; it was existing." So, never doubt concerning the resurrection, my son Rheginos! For if you were not existing in flesh, you received flesh when you entered this world. Why will you not receive flesh when you ascend into the Aeon? That which is better than the flesh is that which is for it (the) cause of life. That which came into being on your account, is it not yours? Does not that which is yours exist with you? Yet, while you are in this world, what is it that you lack? This is what you have been making every effort to learn.

The afterbirth of the body is old age, and you exist in corruption. You have absence as a gain. For you will not give up what is better if you depart. That which is worse has diminution, but there is grace for it.

Nothing, then, redeems us from this world. But the All which
we are, we are saved. We have received 1 salvation from end 1 to end. Let us think in this way! 30 Let us comprehend in this way!

But 1 there are some (who) wish to understand, 1 in the enquiry about 1 those things they are looking into, whether 1 he who is saved, if he leaves 35 his body behind, will 1 be saved immediately. Let 1 no one doubt concerning this. 1 ... indeed, the visible members 1 which are dead 48 shall not be saved, for (only) the living [members] 1 which exist within 1 them would arise.

What, 1 then, is the resurrection? 5 It is always the disclosure of 1 those who have risen. For if you 1 remember reading in the Gospel 1 that Elijah appeared 1 and Moses 10 with him, do not think the resurrection 1 is an illusion. 1 It is no illusion, but 1 it is truth! Indeed, it is more 1 fitting to say that 15 the world is an illusion, 1 rather than the resurrection which 1 has come into being through 1 our Lord the Savior, 1 Jesus Christ. 20

But what am I telling 1 you now? Those who are living 1 shall die. How 1 do they live in an illusion? 1 The rich have become poor, 25 and the kings have been overthrown. 1 Everything is prone 1 to change. The world 1 is an illusion! — lest, 1 indeed, I rail at 30 things to excess!

But 1 the resurrection does not have 1 this aforesaid character, for 1 it is the truth which stands firm. 1 It is the revelation of 35 what is, and the transformation 1 of things, and a 1 transition into 1 newness. For imperishability 49 [descends] upon 1 the perishable; the light flows 1 down upon the darkness, 1 swallowing it up; and the Pleroma 5 fills up the deficiency. 1 These are the symbols and 1 the images of the resurrection. 1 He (Christ) it is who makes the 1 good.

Therefore, do not 10 think in part, O Rheginos, 1 nor live 1 in conformity with this flesh for the sake of 1 unanimity, but flee 1 from the divisions and the 15 fetters, and already you have 1 the resurrection. For if 1 he who will die knows 1 about himself that he 1 will die — even if he spends many 20 years in this life, he is 1 brought to this — 1 why not consider yourself 1 as risen and (already) 1 brought to this? 25 If you have 1 the resurrection but continue as if 1 you are to die — and yet that one knows 1 that he has died — why, then, 1 do I ignore your 30 lack of exercise? It is fitting for each 1 one to practice 1 in a number of ways, and 1 he shall be released from this Element 1 that he may not fall into error but shall himself 35 receive again 1 what at first was. 1

These things I have received from 1 the generosity of my 50 Lord, Jesus Christ. [I have] taught 1 you and your [brethren], my sons, concerning them, 1 while I have not omitted any of 1 the things suitable for
5 But if there is one thing written which is obscure in my exposition of the Word, I shall interpret it for you when you ask. But now, do not be jealous of anyone who is in your number when he is able to help.

Many are looking into this which I have written to you. To these I say: peace (be) among them and grace. I greet you and those who love you in brotherly love.

The Treatise on the Resurrection
THE TRIPARTITE TRACTATE (I,5)

Introduced by

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The final tractate of Codex I is an elaborate, but untitled, Valentinian theological treatise which gives an account of the whole process of devolution from and reintegration into the primordial godhead. The text is divided by scribal decoration into three segments which contain the major acts of the cosmic drama; hence its modern title.

The date of composition can only be determined within broad limits. Since the doctrine of the text represents a revised form of Valentinian theology which may be a response to the criticism of orthodox theologians such as Irenaeus or Hippolytus, the work was probably written in the early to mid third century. The text displays some affinities with Origen's doctrines, although these may be due to common theological and philosophical sources.

The tractate offers no information about the identity of its author. Some scholars have speculated that the Valentinian teacher Heracleon could have written the work. While there are affinities with Heracleon and the Western or Italian school of Valentinianism, the work departs from classical Valentinian doctrine more radically than any known representative of the tradition.

Like the other tractates of Codex I and most of the works in the Nag Hammadi collection, The Tripartite Tractate was originally composed in Greek. The Coptic translation presents numerous difficulties and obscurities, many of which probably reflect the style of the original.

The theological purview of the tractate is comprehensive. The first part (51,1-104,3) describes the emanation of all supernatural entities from their primal source. It begins with the Father (51,1-57,8), described primarily through a *via negativa* as an utterly transcendent entity. What can be affirmed is that he is unique and monadic. The insistence on the unitary character of the Father distinguishes the text from most other Valentinians who posit a primal masculine-feminine dyad, although some members of the school, such as those mentioned by Hippolytus (*Ref. 6.29.2*-8), also hold to a monadic first principle.

Emanating from the Father are two other entities, the Son and the Church (57,8-59,38). At this point the tractate again differs from other Valentinian sources, which regularly posit a more complex godhead. The pleroma or "fullness of deity" usually consists of an ogdoad, a set eight syzygies, or pairs of divine entities, a similarly composed decad, and duodecad. Instead, The Tripartite Tractate posits an initial trinity.

Some elements of the complex traditional Valentinian picture are retained in
the description of the components or "aeons" of the third element of the trinity, the Church (50,1-74,18). The dependence on, as well as revision of, Valentinian sources is clear in the stage of the text which describes the problems created by one of the aeons (74,18-80,11). In other Valentinian accounts, which are based on earlier, non-Christian speculation, the problem in the godhead arises because of a female aeon, Sophia (Wisdom), who attempts to do the impossible. According to different versions of the story, she either tries to produce offspring without her consort or tries to know the unknowable primal source. In either case, she falls outside the divine pleroma and produces the world of psychic and material forces. In The Tripartite Tractate the agent of the rupture in the pleroma is a masculine aeon, the Logos (Word). His fall, which includes elements of both traditional explanations of Sophia's catastrophe, is presented in remarkably positive terms, as a result of his own 'abundant love' (76,19-20). It is also, remarkably enough, in accordance with the Father's will (76,24-77,1). Most importantly, it proceeds from the Logos' free choice (75,35-76,1), a quality which all entities dependent on him share.

The fall of the Logos produces two orders of beings which are outside the pleroma (80,11-85,15). From his confused and defective procreative activity emerge hylic forces. When the Logos, on his own initiative, repents, he produces psychic forces. These supernatural forces will play a role in creation of the first human and in cosmic governance.

The most important result of the conversion of the Logos is the generation of the Savior (85,15-90,13). This transpires when the Logos splits in two. His better, masculine self returns to the pleroma to intercede for his defective, feminine self. That better self, along with the aeons who have never left the pleroma, produce the Savior. That being is also called, by analogy with the highest level of reality, the Son, because as the Son reveals the Father to the aeons of the pleroma, the Savior will provide revelatory insight to those outside the pleroma.

The brief second part of the tractate (104,4-108,12) offers an interpretation of Genesis 1-3. The first human being is produced on the one hand by the Demiurge and on the other hand by the Logos. The former provides Adam's psychic and material components and the latter his spiritual component. The three potencies of the first human being will later be actualized in three classes of human beings at the coming of the Savior.

The third part of the tractate (108,13-138,27) focuses on soteriological issues. The Savior's appearance divides humankind into three classes (118,14-122,12). The pneumatic or spiritual recognize the Savior immediately and respond to him, while the hylic or material reject him utterly. Between these two extremes the psychic or soulful types hesitate, and only gradually come to join the Savior. As is usual in Valentinian texts, the three types have clear social referents. The pneumatics are the Valentinians themselves, the hylics are non-Christians and the psychics are ordinary Christians. The attention lavished on the detailed description of the psychics is indicative of the apologetic and irenic tendencies of the work.

In its final section (129,34-138,27) the text returns to the issue of the psychic and the process of their salvation. It then proceeds to sketch an eschatological tableau, the last portions of which are quite fragmentary. It concludes with a hymn to "the Savior, the Redeemer of all those who belong to the one filled with love, through his Holy Spirit, from now on through all generations forever" (138,20-25).
The Tripartite Tractate has revised traditional Valentinianism on several key points: in its insistence on the unity of the first principle; in the substitution of a trinity for a more complex godhead; in its portrait of the Logos as the element of the godhead responsible for the rupture in the divine; in its moderate assessment of the psychic demiurge; in its detailed analysis of the tripartition of humanity as a result of the freely chosen response of each individual to the appearance of the Savior; and in the hope of final redemption held out to ordinary Christians. This bold revision of Valentinian speculation serves as the basis for a comprehensive theological statement designed to appeal not simply to an isolated sect, but to the church as a whole.

THE TRIPARTITE TRACTATE

I 51, 1-138, 27

Part I

1. Introduction

As for what we can say about the things which are exalted, what is fitting is that we begin with the Father, who is the root of the Totality, the one from whom we have received grace to speak about him.

2. The Father

He existed before anything other than himself came into being. The Father is a single one, like a number, for he is the first one and the one who is only himself. Yet he is not like a solitary individual. Otherwise, how could he be a father? For whenever there is a "father," the name "son" follows. But the single one, who alone is the Father, is like a root with tree, branches and fruit. It is said of him that he is a father in the proper sense, since he is inimitable and immutable. Because of this he is single in the proper sense and is a god, because no one is a god for him nor is anyone a father to him. For he is unbegotten and there is no other who begot him, nor another who created him. For whoever is someone's father or his creator, he, too, has a father and creator. It is certainly possible for him to be father and creator of the one who came into being from him and the one whom he created, for he is not a father in the proper sense, nor a god, because he has someone who begot [him and] who created him. It is, then, only the Father and God in the proper sense...
that no one else begot. As for [the] Totalities, he is the one who begot them and created them. He is without beginning and without end.

Not only is he without end — He is immortal for this reason, that he is unbegotten but he is also invariable in his eternal existence, in his identity, in that by which he is established and in that by which he is great. Neither will he remove himself from that by which he is, nor will anyone else force him to produce an end which he has not ever desired. He has not had anyone who initiated his own existence. Thus, he is himself unchangeable and no one else can remove him from his existence and invariable in his identity, that in which he is, and his greatness, so that he cannot be grasped; nor is it possible for anyone else to change him into a different form or to reduce him, or alter him or diminish him, — since this is so in the fullest sense of the truth — who is the unalterable, immutable one, with immutability clothing him.

Not only is he the one called “without a beginning” and “without an end,” because he is unbegotten and immortal; but just as he has no beginning and no end as he is, he is unattainable in his greatness, inscrutable in his wisdom, incomprehensible in his power, and unfathomable in his sweetness.

In the proper sense he alone, the good, the unbegotten Father and the complete perfect one, is the one filled with all his offspring and with every virtue and with everything of value. And he has more, that is, lack of any malice, in order that it may be discovered that whoever has [anything] is indebted to him, because he gives it, being himself unreachable and unwearied by that which he gives, since he is wealthy in the gifts which he bestows and at rest in the favors which he grants.

He is of such a kind and form and great magnitude that no one else has been with him from the beginning; nor is there a place in which he is, or from which he has come forth, or into which he will go; nor is there a primordial form, which he uses as a model as he works; nor is there any difficulty which accompanies him in what he does; nor is there any material which is at his disposal, from which he creates what he creates; nor any substance within him from which he begets what he begets; nor a co-worker with him, working with him on the things at which he works. To say anything of this sort is ignorant. Rather, (one should speak of him) as good, faultless, perfect, complete, being himself the Totality.
Not one of the names which are conceived, or spoken, seen or grasped, not one of them applies to him, even though they are exceedingly glorious, magnifying and honored. However, it is possible to utter these names for his glory and honor, in accordance with the capacity of each of those who give him glory. Yet as for him, in his own existence, being and form, it is impossible for mind to conceive him, nor can any speech convey him, nor can any eye see him, nor can any body grasp him, because of his inscrutable greatness and his incomprehensible depth, and his immeasurable height, and his illimitable will. This is the nature of the unbegotten one, which does not touch anything else; nor is it joined (to anything) in the manner of something which is limited. Rather, he possesses this constitution, without having a face or a form, things which are understood through perception, whence also comes (the epithet) "the incomprehensible." If he is incomprehensible, then it follows that he is unknowable, that he is the one who is inconceivable by any thought, invisible by any thing, ineffable by any word, untouchable by any hand. He alone is the one who knows himself as he is, along with his form and his greatness and his magnitude, and since he has the ability to conceive of himself, to see himself, to name himself, to comprehend himself, he alone is the one who is his own mind, his own eye, his own mouth, his own form, and he is what he thinks, what he sees, what he speaks, what he grasps, himself, the one who is inconceivable, ineffable, incomprehensible, immutable, while sustaining, joyous, true, delightful, and restful is that which he conceives, that which he sees, that about which he speaks, that which he has as thought. He transcends all wisdom, and is above all intellect, and is above all glory, and is above all beauty, and all sweetness, and all greatness, and any depth and any height.

If this one, who is unknowable in his nature, to whom pertain all the greatnesses which I already mentioned, if out of the abundance of his sweetness he wishes to grant knowledge so that he might be known, he has the ability to do so. He has his power, which is his will. Now, however, in silence he himself holds back, he who is the great one, who is the cause of bringing the Totalities into their eternal being.

It is in the proper sense that he begets himself as ineffable, since he alone is self-begotten, since he conceives of himself, and since he knows himself as he is. What is worthy of his admiration and glory and honor and praise, he produces because of the boundlessness of
his greatness, and the unsearchability of his wisdom, and the immeasurability of his power and his untasteable sweetness. He is the one who projects himself thus, as generation, having glory and honor marvelous and lovely; the one who glorifies himself, who marvels, honors, who also loves; the one who has a Son, who subsists in him, who is silent concerning him, who is the ineffable one in the ineffable one, the invisible one, the incomprehensible one, the inconceivable one in the inconceivable one. Thus, he exists in him forever. The Father, in the way we mentioned earlier, in an unbegotten way, is the one in whom he knows himself, who begot him having a thought, which is the thought of him, that is, the perception of his constitution forever. That is, however, in the proper sense, [the] silence and the wisdom and the grace, if it is designated properly in this way.

3. The Son and the Church

Just as Father exists in the proper sense, the one before whom there was no one else and [the one] apart from [whom] there is no other unbegotten one, so too the [Son] exists in the proper sense, the one before whom there was no other, and after whom no other son exists. Therefore, he is a firstborn and an only Son, “firstborn” because no one exists before him and “only Son” because no one is after him. Furthermore, he has his fruit, that which is unknowable because of its surpassing greatness. Yet he wanted it to be known, because of the riches of his sweetness. And he revealed the unexplainable power and he combined with it the great abundance of his generosity.

Not only did the Son exist from the beginning, but the Church, too, existed from the beginning. Now, he who thinks that the discovery that the Son is an only son opposes the statement (about the Church) — because of the mysterious quality of the matter it is not so. For just as the Father is a unity and has revealed himself as Father for him alone, so too the Son was found to be a brother to himself alone, in virtue of the fact that he is unbegotten and without beginning. He wonders at himself [along with the] Father, and he gives [him(self)] glory and honor and [love.] Furthermore, he too is the one whom he conceives of as Son, in accordance with the dispositions: “without beginning” and “without end.” Thus is the matter something which is fixed. Being innumerable and illimit-
able, his offspring are indivisible. Those which exist have come forth from the Son and the Father like kisses, because of the multitude of some who kiss one another with a good, insatiable thought, the kiss being a unity, although it involves many kisses. This is to say, it is the Church consisting of many men that existed before the aeons, which is called, in the proper sense, "the aeons of the aeons." This is the nature of the holy imperishable spirits, upon which the Son rests, since it is his essence, just as the Father rests upon the Son.

4. Aenoic Emanations

[... ] the Church exists in the dispositions and properties in which the Father and the Son exist, as I have said from the start. Therefore, it subsists in the procreations of innumerable aeons. Also in an uncountable way [they] too beget, by the properties and the dispositions in which it (the Church) exists. [For] these [comprise its] association which [they form] toward one another and [toward those] who have come forth from them toward the Son, for whose glory they exist. Therefore, it is not possible for mind to conceive of him — He was the perfection of that place — nor can speech express them, for they are ineffable and unnameable and inconceivable. They alone have the ability to name themselves and to conceive of themselves. For they have not been rooted in these places.

Those of that place are ineffable, (and) innumerable in the system which is both the manner and the size, the joy, the gladness of the unbegotten, nameless, unnameable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible one. It is the fullness of paternity, so that his abundance is a begetting of the aeons.

They were forever in thought, for the Father was like a thought and a place for them. When their generations had been established, the one who is completely in control wished to lay hold of and to bring forth that which was deficient in the, and he brought forth those him. But since he is [as] he is, [he is] a spring, which is not diminished by the water which abundantly flows from it. While they were in the Father's thought, that is, in the hidden depth, the depth knew them, but they were unable to know the depth in which they were; nor was it possible for them to know themselves, nor for them to know anything else. That is, they were with the Father; they did not exist for themselves. Rather, they only had existence in the
manner 1 of a seed, so that it has been discovered 1 that they existed like a 1 fetus. Like the word 35 he begot them, subsisting 1 spermatically, and 1 the ones whom he was to beget had not yet come into being 61 from him. The one who 1 first thought of them, the Father, 1 — not only so that they might exist for him, 1 but also that they might exist for themselves as well, 5 that they might then exist in [his] thought 1 as mental substance 1 and that they might exist for themselves too, — 1 sowed a thought like a [spermatic] seed. 1 Now, in order that [they] 10 might know [what exists] 1 for them, he graciously [granted the] 1 initial form, while in order that they might [recognize] 1 who is the Father who exists [for them]. 1 he gave them the name “Father” 15 by means of a voice proclaiming to them 1 that what exists exists through 1 that name, which they have 1 by virtue of the fact that they came into being, because the exaltation, 1 which has escaped their notice, is in the name. 20

The infant, while in the 1 form of a fetus 1 has enough for itself, 1 before ever seeing the one who 1 sowed it. Therefore, they had 25 the sole task 1 of searching for him, realizing 1 that he exists, ever wishing to find out 1 what exists. Since, however, 1 the perfect Father is good, 30 just as he did not hear 1 them at all so that they would exist (only) 1 in his thought, but rather granted that 1 they, too, might come into being, so 1 also will he give them grace 35 to know what exists, 1 that is, the one who knows 1 himself eternally, 62 [...] 1 form to [know] what 1 exists, just as people are begotten in this 1 place: when they are born, they are in 5 the light, so that they see those who have begotten them. 1

The Father brought forth everything, 1 like a little child, 1 like a drop from a 1 spring, like a blossom 10 from a [vine], like a 1 [flower], like a 1 [planting] 1 [...] in need of gaining 1 [nourishment] and growth and 1 faultlessness. He withheld it 15 for a time. He who had thought 1 of it from the very beginning, 1 possessed it from the very beginning, 1 and saw it, but he closed it off 1 to those who first came from 20 him. (He did this,) not out of envy, but 1 in order that the aeons might not receive their faultlessness 1 from the very beginning 1 and might not exalt themselves to the 1 glory, to the Father, and might think 25 that from themselves alone 1 they have this. But 1 just as he wished 1 to grant that they might come into being, so 1 too, in order that they might come into being as 30 faultless ones, when he wished, he gave them 1 the perfect idea of 1 beneficience 1 toward them.

The one whom he raised up 1 as a light for those who came 35 from himself, the one 1 from whom they take their name, 1 he is the Son, who is full, complete 1 and faultless. He brought him forth 1 mingled with
what came forth from him [. . .] 1 partaking of the [. . .] 1 the Totality, in accordance with [. . .] by which each 1 one can receive [him] for himself, 5 though such was not his greatness 1 before he was received by it. Rather, 1 he exists by himself. As 1 for the parts in which he exists in his own manner and 1 form and greatness, 10 it is possible for 〈them〉 to see him 1 and speak about that which they know 1 of him, since they wear 1 him while he wears them, [because] 1 it is possible for them to comprehend him. 15 He, however, is as he is, 1 incomparable. 1 In order that the Father might receive 1 honor from each one 1 and reveal himself, 20 even in his ineffability, 1 hidden, and invisible, 1 they marvel at him mentally. 1 Therefore, the 1 greatness of his loftiness consists in the fact that they 25 speak about him and see him. 1 He becomes manifest, 1 so that he may be hymned because of the abundance 1 of his sweetness, with the grace 1 of 〈. . .〉. And just as 30 the admirations 1 of the silences 1 are eternal generations 1 and they are mental offspring, 1 so too the dispositions 35 of the word are spiritual 1 emanations. Both of them 〈admirations and dispositions〉, 1 since they belong to a word, 64 are 〈seeds〉 and 1 thoughts [of] his offspring, 1 and roots which live 1 forever, appearing 5 to be offspring which have come forth from 1 themselves, being minds and 1 spiritual offspring to 1 the glory of the Father.

There is no need 1 for voice and spirit, mind and 10 word, because there is no need to 1 [work at] that which they desire 1 [to do], but on the pattern 1 by which [he was] existing, so 1 are those who have come forth from him, 15 begetting everything which they desire. And 1 the one whom they conceive of, and 1 whom they speak about, and the one 1 toward whom they move, and 1 the one in whom they are, and 20 the one whom they hymn, thereby glorifying him, 1 he has 1 sons. For this is their procreative 1 power, like 1 those from whom they have come, 25 according to their mutual assistance, 1 since they assist one another 1 like the unbegotten ones. 1

The Father, in accordance with his 1 exalted position over the Totalities, being 30 an unknown and incomprehensible one, 1 has such greatness 1 and magnitude, that, 1 if he had revealed himself 1 suddenly, quickly, 35 to all the exalted ones among the aeons 1 who had come forth from him, they 1 would have perished. Therefore, he 1 withheld his power and his inexhaustibility 1 within that in which he 65 is. [He is] 1 ineffable [and] unnameable 1 and exalted above every mind 1 and every word. This one, however, stretched 5 himself out 1 and it was that which he stretched out 1 which gave a foundation and 1 a space and a dwelling
place for the universe, a name of his being "the one through whom," since he is Father of the All, out of his laboring for those who exist, having sown into their thought that [they] might seek after him. The abundance of their [...] consists in the fact that they understand that he exists and in the fact that they ask what it is that was existing. This one was given to them for enjoyment and nourishment and joy and an abundance of illumination, which consists in his fellow laboring, his knowledge and his mingling with them, that is, the one who is called and is, in fact, the Son, since he is the Totalities and the one of whom they know both who he is and that it is he who clothes. This is the one who is called "Son" and the one of whom they understand that he exists and they were seeking after him. This is the one who exists as Father and (as) the one about whom they cannot speak, and the one of whom they do not conceive. This is the one who first came into being.

It is impossible for anyone to conceive of him or think of him. Or can anyone approach there, toward the exalted one, toward the pre-existent in the proper sense? But all the names conceived or spoken about him are presented in honor, as a trace of him, according to the ability of each one of those who glorify him. Now he who arose from him when he stretched himself out for begetting and for knowledge on the part of the Totalities, he all of the names, without falsification, and he is, in the proper sense, the sole first one, [the] man of the Father, that is, the one whom I call

the form of the formless, the body of the bodiless, the face of the invisible, the word of the unutterable, the mind of the inconceivable, the fountain which flowed from him, the root of those who are planted, and the god of those who exist, the light of those whom he illumines, the love of those whom he loved, the providence of those for whom he providentially cares, the wisdom of those whom he made wise, the power of those to whom he gives power, the assembly [of] those whom he assembles to him, the revelation of the things which are sought after, the eye of those who see,
the breadth of those who breathe, \(1\)
the life of those who live,
the unity \(1\) of those who are mixed with the Totalities. \(30\)

All of them exist in the single one, \(1\) as he clothes himself completely \(1\) and by his single name \(1\) he is never called. \(1\) And in \(35\) this unique way they are equally \(1\) the single one and the Totalities. \(1\) He is neither divided as a body, \(1\) nor is he separated into the names \(1\) which he has [received], \(40\) (so that) he is one thing in this way and another \(67\) in [another way.] Also, neither \(1\) does he change in [...] nor \(1\) does he turn into [the names] which he \(1\) [thinks of,] and become now this, now something else, this thing now being one thing \(1\) and, at another time, something else, \(1\) but rather he is wholly himself to the uttermost. [He] \(1\) is each and every one of the Totalities \(1\) forever at the same time. He is what \(10\) all of them are. He brought \(1\) the Father to the Totalities. He also is the Totalities, \(1\) for he is the one who is knowledge \(1\) for himself and he is \(1\) each one of the properties. He \(15\) has the powers and [he is] beyond \(1\) all that which he knows, \(1\) while seeing himself in himself \(1\) completely and having a \(1\) Son and form. Therefore, \(20\) his powers and properties are innumerable \(1\) and inaudible, \(1\) because of the begetting [by] which he \(1\) begets them. Innumerable \(1\) and indivisible are \(25\) the begettings of his words, and \(1\) his commands and his Totalities. \(1\) He knows them, which things he himself is, \(1\) since they are in \(1\) the single name, and \(30\) are all speaking in it. And \(1\) he brings (them) forth, in order that \(1\) it might be discovered that they \(1\) exist according to their individual properties in a unified way. \(1\) And he did not reveal the multitude \(35\) to the Totalities at once \(1\) nor did he reveal his equality \(1\) to those who had come forth from him. \(1\)

5. Aeonic Life

All those who came forth from him, \(1\) (who) are the aeons of the aeons, \(68\) being emanations and offspring of \(1\) (his) procreative nature, \(1\) they too, in their procreative \(1\) nature, have \(1\) given glory to \(5\) the Father, as he was \(1\) the cause of their establishment. This is what \(1\) we said previously, namely that he creates \(1\) the aeons as roots and \(10\) springs and fathers, and that he \(1\) is the one to whom they give glory. They have begotten, for \(1\) he has knowledge \(1\) and wisdom \(1\) and the Totalities knew \(15\) that it is from knowledge \(1\) and wisdom that they have come forth. \(1\) They would have brought forth \(1\) a seeming honor: “The Father is the one \(1\) who is the Totalities,” \(20\) if the aeons had risen
up to give 1 honor individually. 1 Therefore, in the 1 song of glorification and 1 in the power of the unity 25 of him from 1 whom they have come, they were drawn into a mingling 1 and a combination and a unity 1 with one another. 1 They offered glory worthy of 30 the Father from the pleromatic 1 congregation, which is a 1 single representation although many, 1 because it was brought forth as a glory 1 for the single one and because 35 they came forth toward the one who 1 is himself the Totalities. Now, this 69 was a praise [...] 1 the one who brought forth the Totalities, 1 being a first-fruit of the immortals 1 and an eternal one, because, 5 having come forth from the living aeons, being 1 perfect and full because of the one who is perfect 1 and full, it left full 1 and perfect those who have given glory in 1 a perfect way because of the 10 fellowship. For, like the faultless Father, 1 when he is glorified he 1 also hears the glory which glorifies him, 1 so as to make them manifest as that which 1 he is.

The cause of the second 15 honor which accrued to them 1 is that which was returned 1 to them from the Father when they had known 1 the grace by which they bore fruit with one another 1 because of the Father. 20 As a result, just as they 1 <were> brought forth in glory for the Father, 1 so too in order to appear 1 perfect, they appeared 1 acting by giving glory.

They 25 were fathers of the third glory 1 according to the independence and 1 the power which was begotten with them, 1 since each one of them individually does not 1 exist so as to give glory 30 in a unitary way to him whom he loves. 1

They are the first and the 1 second and thus both of them are perfect and 1 full, for they are manifestations 1 of the Father who is perfect 35 and full, as well as of those who came forth, 1 who are perfect by the fact that they glorify 1 the perfect one. The fruit of the third, however, 1 consists of honors of 1 the will of each one of the aeons 40 and each one of the properties. — 1 The Father has power. — It exists 70 fully, 1 perfect in [the thought] which is a product of 1 agreement, since it is a product 1 of the individuality 5 of the aeons. It is this which he loves 1 and over which he has power, 1 as it gives glory to the Father by means of it. 1

For this reason, they are minds of 1 minds, which are found to be 10 words of words, 1 elders of 1 elders, degrees 1 of degrees, which are exalted above 1 one another. Each one 15 of those who give glory has 1 his place and his 1 exaltation and his dwelling and his 1 rest, which consists of the glory 1 which he brings forth. 20
All those who glorify the Father have their begetting eternally, — they beget in the act of assisting one another — since the emanations are limitless and immeasurable and since there is no envy on the part of the Father toward those who came forth from him in regard to their begetting something equal or similar to him, since he is the one who exists in the Totalities, begetting and revealing himself. Whomever he wishes, he makes into a father, of whom he in fact is Father, and a god, of whom he in fact is God, and he makes them the Totalities, whose entirety he is. In the proper sense all the names which are great are kept there, these (names) which the angels share, who have come into being in the cosmos along with the archons, although [they] do not have any resemblance to the eternal beings.

The entire system of the aeons has a love and a longing for the perfect, complete discovery of the Father and this is their unimpeded agreement. Though the Father reveals himself eternally, he did not wish that they should know him, since he grants that he be conceived of in such a way as to be sought for, while keeping to himself his unsearchable primordial being.

It is he, [the] Father, who gave root impulses to the aeons, since they are places on the path which leads toward him, as toward a school of behavior. He has extended to them faith in and prayer to him whom they do not see; and a firm hope in him of whom they do not conceive; and a fruitful love, which looks toward that which it does not see; and an acceptable understanding of the eternal mind; and a blessing, which is riches and freedom; and a wisdom of the one who desires the glory of the Father for his thought.

It is by virtue of his will that the Father, the one who is exalted, is known, that is, (by virtue of) the spirit which breathes in the Totalities and it gives them an idea of seeking after the unknown one, just as one is drawn by a pleasant aroma to search for the thing from which the aroma arises, since the aroma of the Father surpasses these ordinary ones. For his sweetness leaves the aeons in ineffable pleasure and it gives them their idea of mingling with him who wants them to know him in a united way and to assist one another in the spirit which is sown within them. Though existing under a great weight, they are renewed in an inexpressable way, since it is impossible for them to be separated from that in which they are set in an uncomprehending way, because they will not speak, being silent about the Father's glory, about the one who has power to
THE TRIPARTITE TRACTATE (1,5)

speak, and yet they will take form from him. He revealed [himself, though] it is impossible to speak of him. They have him, hidden in a thought, since from this one [. . .]. They are silent about the way the Father is in his form and his nature and his greatness, while the aeons have become worthy of knowing through his spirit that he is unnameable and incomprehensible. It is through his spirit, which is the trace of the search for him, that he provides them the ability to conceive of him and to speak about him.

Each one of the aeons is a name, (that is), each of the properties and powers of the Father, since he exists in many names, which are intermingled and harmonious with one another. It is possible to speak of him because of the wealth of speech, just as the Father is a single name, because he is a unity, yet is innumerable in his properties and names.

The emanation of the Totalities, which exist from the one who exists, did not occur according to a separation from one another, as something cast off from the one who begets them. Rather, their begetting is like a process of extension, as the Father extends himself to those whom he loves, so that those who have come forth from him might become him as well.

Just as the present aeon, though a unity, is divided by units of time and units of time are divided into seasons and seasons into months, and months into days, and days into hours, and hours into moments, so too the aeon of the Truth, since it is a unity and multiplicity, receives honor in the small and the great names according to the power of each to grasp it — by way of analogy — like a spring which is what it is, yet flows into streams and lakes and canals and branches, or like a root spread out beneath trees and branches with its fruit, or like a human body, which is partitioned in an indivisible way into members of members, primary members and secondary, great [and] small.

6. The Imperfect Begetting by the Logos

The aeons have brought themselves forth in accord with the third fruit by the freedom of the will and by the wisdom with which he favored them for their thought. They do not wish to give honor [with] that which is from an agreement, [though] it was produced for words of praise for each of the Pleromas. Nor do they wish to give honor with the Totality. Nor do they wish (to do so) with anyone else
who was originally above the depth of that one, or (above) his place, except, however, for the one who exists in an exalted name and in the exalted place, and only if he receives from the one who wished (to give honor), 75 and takes it to him(self) for the one above him, and (only if) he begets him(self), so to speak, himself, and, through that one, begets him(self) along with that which he is, and himself becomes renewed along with the one who came upon him, by his brother, and sees him and entreats him about the matter, namely, he who wished to ascend to him.

So that it might be in this way, the one who wished to give honor does not say anything to him about this, except only that there is a limit to speech set in the Pleroma, so that they are silent about the incomprehensibility of the Father, but they speak about the one who wishes to comprehend him. It came to one of the aeons that he should attempt to grasp the incomprehensibility and give glory to it and especially to the ineffability of the Father. [Since] he is a Logos of the unity, he is one, though he is not from the agreement of the Totalities, nor from him who brought them forth, namely, the one who brought forth the Totality, the Father.

This aeon was among those to whom was given wisdom, so that he could become pre-existent in each one’s thought. By that which he wills will they be produced. Therefore, he received a wise nature in order to examine the hidden basis, since he is a wise fruit; for, the free will which was begotten with the Totalities was a cause for this one, such as to make him do what he desired, with no one to restrain him.

The intent, then, of the Logos, who is this one, was good. When he had come forth, he gave glory to the Father, even if it led to something beyond possibility, since he had wanted to bring forth one who is perfect, from an agreement in which he had not been, and without having the command.

This aeon was last to have brought forth by mutual assistance, and he was small in magnitude. And before he begot anything else for the glory of the will and in agreement with the Totalities, he acted, magnanimously, from an abundant love, and set out toward that which surrounds the perfect glory, for it was not without the will of the Father that the Logos was produced, which is to say, not without it will he go forth. But he, the Father, had brought him forth for those about whom he knew that it was fitting that they should come into being.
The Father and the Totalities drew away from him, so that the limit which the Father had set might be established — for it is not from grasping the incomprehensibility but by the will of the Father, and furthermore, (they withdrew) so that the things which have come to be might become an organization which would come into being. If it were to come, it would not come into being by the manifestation of the Pleroma. Therefore, it is not fitting to criticize the movement which is the Logos, but it is fitting that we should say about the movement of the Logos that it is a cause of an organization which has been destined to come about.

The Logos himself caused it to happen, being complete and unitary, for the glory of the Father, whom he desired, and (he did so) being content with it, but those whom he wished to take hold of firmly he begot in shadows [and] copies and likenesses. For, he was not able to bear the sight of the light, but he looked into the depth and he doubted. Out of this there was a division — he became deeply troubled and a turning away because of his self-doubt and division, forgetfulness and ignorance of himself and of that which is.

His self-exaltation and his expectation of comprehending the incomprehensible became firm for him and was in him. But the sicknesses followed him when he went beyond himself, having come into being from self-doubt, namely from the fact that he did not reach the attainment of the glories of the Father, the one whose exalted status is among things unlimited. This one did not attain him, for he did not receive him.

The one whom he himself brought forth rushed up to that which is his and this kin of his in the Pleroma abandoned him who came to be in the defect along with those who had come forth from him in an imaginary way, since they are not his. When he who produced himself as perfect actually did bring himself forth, he became weak like a female nature which has abandoned its virile counterpart.

From that which was deficient in itself there came those things which came into being from his thought and [his] arrogance, but from that which is perfect in him he left it and raised up to those who are his. He was in the Pleroma as a remembrance for him so that he [would be] saved from his arrogance.

The one who ran on high and the one who drew him to himself were not barren, but in bringing forth a fruit in the Pleroma, they upset those who were in the defect.
Like the Pleromas are the things which came into being from the arrogant thought, which are their likenesses, copies, shadows, and phantasms, lacking reason and the light, these which belong to the vain thought, since they are not products of anything. Therefore, their end will be like their beginning: from that which did not exist (they are) to return once again to that which will not be. It is they, however, by themselves who are greater, more powerful, and more honored than the names which are given to them, which are their shadows. In the manner of a reflection are they beautiful. For the [face] of the copy normally takes its beauty from that of which it is a copy.

They thought of themselves that they are beings existing by themselves and are without a source, since they do not see anything else existing before them. Therefore, they [lived] in disobedience [and] acts of rebellion, without having humbled themselves before the one because of whom they came into being.

They wanted to command one another, overcoming one another in their vain ambition, while the glory which they possess contains a cause [of] the system which was to be.

They are likenesses of the things which are exalted. They were brought to a lust for power in each one of them, according to the greatness of the name of which each is a shadow, each one imagining that it is superior to his fellows.

The thought of these others was not barren, but just like those of which they are shadows, all that they thought about they have as potential sons; those of whom they thought they had as offspring. Therefore, it happened that many offspring came forth from them, as fighters as warriors, as troublemakers, as apostates. They are disobedient beings, lovers of power. All [the] other beings of this sort were [brought] forth from these.

7. The Conversion of the Logos

The Logos was a cause of those who came into being and he continued all the more to be at a loss and he was astonished. Instead of perfection, he saw a defect; instead of unification, he saw division; instead of stability, he [saw] disturbances; instead of [rests,] tumults. Neither was it possible for him to make them cease from [loving] disturbance, nor was it possible for him to destroy it. He was completely powerless, once his totality and his exaltation abandoned him.
Those who had come into being not knowing themselves both did not know the Pleromas from which they came forth and did not know the one who was the cause of their existence.

The Logos, being in such unstable conditions, did not continue to bring forth anything like emanations, the things which are in the Pleroma, the glories which exist for the honor of the Father. Rather, he brought forth little weaklings, [hindered] by the illnesses by which he too was hindered. It was the likeness of the disposition which was a unity, that which was the cause of the things which do not themselves exist from the first.

Until the one who brought forth into the defect these things which were thus in need, until he judged those who came into being because of him contrary to reason—which is the judgment which became a condemnation—he struggled against them unto destruction, that is, the ones who struggled against the condemnation and whom the wrath pursues, while it (the wrath) accepts and redeems (them) from their (false) opinion and apostasy, since from it is the conversion which is also called “metanoia.” The Logos turned to another opinion and another thought. Having turned away from evil, he turned toward the good things. Following the conversion came the thought of the things which exist and the prayer for the one who converted himself to the good.

The one who is in the Pleroma was what he first prayed to and remembered; then (he remembered) his brothers individually and (yet) always with one another; then all of them together, but before all of them, the Father. The prayer of the agreement was a help for him in his own return and (in that of) the Totality, for a cause of his remembering those who have existed from the first was his being remembered. This is the thought which calls out from afar, bringing him back.

All his prayer and remembering were numerous powers according to that limit. For there is nothing barren in his thought.

The powers were good and were greater than those of the likeness. For those belonging to the likeness also belong to a nature of [falsehood]. From an illusion of similarity and a thought of arrogance has [come about] that which they became. And they originate from the thought which first knew [them.]

To what do the former beings pertain? They are like forgetfulness and heavy sleep; being like those who dream troubled dreams, to whom sleep comes while they—the ones who dream—are oppressed.
The others are like some creatures of light for him, looking for the rising of the sun, since it happened that they saw in him dreams which are truly sweet. It immediately put a stop to the emanations of the thought. They [did] not any longer have their substance and also they did not have honor any longer.

Though he is not equal to those who pre-existed, if they were superior to the likenesses, it was he alone through whom they were more exalted than those, for they are not from a good intent.

It was not from the sickness which came into being that they were produced, from which is the good intent, but (from) the one who sought after the pre-existent. Once he had prayed, he both raised himself to the good and sowed in them a pre-disposition to seek and pray to the glorious pre-existent one, and he sowed in them a thought about him and an idea, so that they should think that something greater than themselves exists prior to them, although they did not understand what it was. Begetting harmony and mutual love through that thought, they acted in unity and unanimity, since from unity and from unanimity they have received their very being.

They were stronger than them in the lust for power, for they were more honored than the first ones, who had been raised above them. Those had not humbled themselves. They thought about themselves that they were beings originating from themselves alone and were without a source. As they brought forth at first according to their own birth, the two orders assaulted one another, fighting for command because of their manner of being. As a result, they were submerged in forces and natures in accord with the condition of mutual assault, having lust for power and all other things of this sort. It is from these that the vain love of glory draws all of them to the desire of the lust for power, while none of them has the exalted thought nor acknowledges it.

The powers of this thought are prepared in the works of the pre-existent ones, those of which they are the representations. For the order of those of this sort had mutual harmony, but it fought against the order of those of the likeness, while the order of those of the likeness wages war against the representations and acts against it alone, because of its wrath. From this it one another, many necessity appointed them and might prevail was not a multitude, and their envy and their wrath and violence and desire and prevailing ignorance produce empty matters and powers of various sorts, mixed in great
number with one another; while the mind of the Logos, who was a cause of their begetting, was open to a revelation of the hope which would come to him from above.

8. The Emanation of the Savior

The Logos which moved had the hope and the expectation of him who is exalted. As for those of the shadow, he separated himself from them in every way, since they fight against him and are not at all humble before him. He was content with the beings of the thought. And as for the one who is set up in this way and who is within the exalted boundary, remembering the one who is defective, the Logos brought him forth in an invisible way, among those who came into being according to the thought, according to the one who was with them, until the light shone upon him from above as a lifegiver, the one who was begotten by the thought of brotherly love of the pre-existent Pleromas.

The stumbling, which happened to the aeons of the Father of the Totalities who did not suffer, was brought to them, as if it were their own, in a careful and non-malicious and immensely sweet way. It was brought to the Totalities so that they might be instructed about the defect by the single one, from whom they all received strength to eliminate the defects.

The order which was his came into being from him who ran on high and that which brought itself forth from him and from the entire perfection. The one who ran on high became for the one who was defective an intercessor with the emanation of the aeons which had come into being in accord with the things which exist. When he prayed to them, they consented joyously and willingly, since they were in agreement, and with harmonious consent, to aid the defective one. They gathered together, asking the Father with beneficent intent that there be aid from above, from the Father, for his glory, since the defective one could not become perfect in any other way, unless it was the will of the Pleroma of the Father, which he had drawn to himself, revealed, and given to the defective one. Then from the harmony, in a joyous willingness which had come into being, they brought forth the fruit, which was a begetting from the harmony, a unity, a possession of the Totalities, revealing the countenance of the Father, of whom the aeons thought as they gave glory and prayed for help for their brother with a wish in which the Father counted himself with
them. Thus, it was willingly and glad that they bring forth the fruit. And he made manifest the agreement of the revelation of his union with them — which is his beloved Son. But the Son in whom the Totalities are pleased put himself on them as a garment, through which he gave perfection to the defective one, and gave confirmation to those who are perfect, the one who is properly called "Savior" and "the Redeemer" and "the Well-Pleasing one" and "the Beloved," "the one to whom prayers have been offered" and "the Christ" and "the Light of those appointed," in accordance with the ones from whom he was brought forth, since he has become the names of the positions [which] were given to him. Yet, what other name may be applied to him except "the Son," as we previously said, since he is the knowledge of the Father, whom he wanted them to know?

Not only did the aeons generate the countenance of the Father to whom they gave praise, which was written previously, but also they generated their own; for the aeons who give glory generated their countenance and their face. They were produced as an army for him, as for a king, since the beings of the thought have a powerful fellowship and an intermingled harmony. They came forth in a multifaceted form, in order that the one to whom help was to be given might see those to whom he had prayed for help. He also sees the one who gave it to him.

The fruit of the agreement with him, of which we previously spoke, is subject to the power of the Totalities. For the Father has set the Totalities within him, both the ones which pre-exist and the ones which are, and the ones which will be. He was capable (of doing it). He revealed those which he had placed within him. He did not give them, when he entrusted [them] to him. He directed the organization of the universe according to the authority which was given him from the first and (according to) the power of the task. Thus, he began and effected his revelation.

The one in whom the Father is and the one in whom the Totalities are created before the one who lacked sight. He instructed him about those who searched for their sight, by means of the shining of that perfect light. He first perfected him in ineffable joy. He perfected him for himself as a perfect one and he also gave him what is appropriate to each individual. For this is the determination of the first joy. And sowed in him in an invisible way a word which is destined to be knowledge. And he gave him power to separate and cast out from himself those who are disobedient to him.
Thus, he made himself manifest to him. But to those who came into being because of him he revealed a form surpassing them. They acted in a hostile way toward one another. Suddenly he revealed himself to them, approaching them in the form of lightning. And in putting an end to the entanglement which they have with one another he stopped it by the sudden revelation, which they were not informed about, did not expect, and did not know of. Because of this, they were afraid and fell down, since they were not able to bear the appearance of the light which struck them. The one who appeared was an assault for the two orders. Just as the beings of thought had been given the name "little one," so they have a faint notion that they have the exalted one, — he exists before them, — and they have sown within them an attitude of amazement at the exalted one who will become manifest. Therefore, they welcomed his revelation and they worshipped him. They became convinced witnesses to him. They acknowledged the light which had come into being as one stronger than those who fought against them. The beings of the likeness, however, were exceedingly afraid, since they were not able to hear about him in the beginning, that there is a vision of this sort. Therefore they fell down to the pit of ignorance which is called "the Outer Darkness," "Chaos" and "Hades" and "the Abyss." He set up what was beneath the order of the beings of thought, as it was stronger than they. They were worthy of ruling over the unspeakable darkness, since it is theirs and is the lot which was assigned to them. He granted them that they, too, should be of use for the organization which was to come, to which he had assigned them.

There is a great difference between the revelation of the one who came into being to the one who was defective and to those things which are to come into being because of him. For he revealed himself to him within him, since he is with him, is a fellow sufferer with him, gives him rest little by little, makes him grow, lifts him up, gives himself to him completely for enjoyment from a vision. But to those who fall outside, he revealed himself quickly and in a striking way and withdrew to himself suddenly without having let them see him.

9. The Pleroma of the Logos

When the Logos which was defective was illumined, his Pleroma began. He escaped those who had disturbed him at first. He became unmixed with them. He stripped off that arrogant thought. He re-
ceived mingling with the Rest, when those who had been disobedient to him at first bent down and humbled themselves before him. And [he] rejoiced over the visitation of his brothers who had visited him. He gave glory and praise to those who had become manifest as a help to him, while he gave thanks, because he had escaped those who revolted against him, and admired and honored the greatness and those who had appeared to him in a determined way. He generated manifest images of the living visages, pleasing among [things] which are good, existing among the things which exist, resembling them in beauty, but unequal to them in truth, since they [are] not from an agreement with him, between the one who brought them forth and the one who revealed himself to him. But in wisdom and knowledge he acts, mingling the Logos with him(self) entirely. Therefore, those which came forth from him are great, just as that which is truly great.

After he was amazed at the beauty of the ones who had appeared to him, he professed gratitude for this visitation. The Logos performed this activity, through those from whom he had received aid, for the stability of those who had come into being because of him and so that they might receive something good, since he thought to pray for the organization of all those who came forth from him, which is stabilized, so that it might make them established. Therefore, those whom he intentionally produced are in chariots, just as those who came into being, those who have appeared, so that they might pass through every place of things which are below, so that each one might be given the place which is constituted as he is. This is destruction for the beings of the likeness, yet is an act of beneficence for the beings of the thought, a revelation of those who are from the ordinance, which was a unity while suffering, while they are seeds, which have not come to be by themselves.

The one who appeared was a countenance of the Father and of the harmony. He was a garment (composed) of every grace, and food which is for those whom the Logos brought forth while praying and [giving] glory and honor. This is the one whom he glorified and honored while looking to those to whom he prayed, so that he might perfect them through the images which he had brought forth.

The Logos added even more to their mutual assistance and to the hope of the promise, since they have joy and abundant rest and undefiled pleasures. He generated those whom he remembered at first, when they were not with him, (he generated them) having the perfec-
Now, while he who belongs to the vision is with him, he exists in hope and faith in the perfect Father, as much as the Totalities. He appears to him before he mingles with him in order that the things which have come into being might not perish by looking upon the light, for they can not accept the great, exalted stature.

The thought of the Logos, who had returned to his stability and ruled over those who had come into being because of him, was called "Aeon" and "Place" of all those whom he had brought forth in accord with the ordinance, and it is also called "Synagogue of Salvation," because he healed him(self) from the dispersal, which is the multifarious thought and it is also called the single thought. Similarly, it is called "Storehouse," because of the rest which he obtained, giving (it) to himself alone. And it is also called "Bride," because of the joy of the one who gave himself to him in the hope of fruit from the union, and who appeared to him. It is also called "Kingdom," because of the stability which he received, while he rejoices at the domination over those who fought him. And it is called "the Joy of the Lord," because of the gladness in which he clothed himself. With him is the light, giving him recompense for the good things which are in him and (with him is) the thought of freedom.

The aeon, of whom we previously spoke, is above the two orders of those who fight against one another. It is not a companion of those who hold dominion and is not implicated in the illnesses and weaknesses, things belonging to the thought and to the likeness.

That in which the Logos set himself, perfect in joy, was an aeon, having the form of matter, but also having the constitution of the cause, which is the one who revealed himself. (The aeon was) an image of those things which are in the Pleroma, those things which came into being from the abundance of the enjoyment of the one who exists joyously. It, moreover, the countenance of the one who revealed himself, was in the sincerity and the attentiveness and the promise concerning the things for which he asked. It had the designation of the Son and his essence and his power and his form, who is the one whom he loved and in whom he was pleased, who was entreated in a loving way. It was light and was a desire to be established and an openness for instruction and an eye for vision, qualities which it had from the exalted ones. It was also wisdom for his thinking in opposition to the things beneath the organization. It was also a word for speaking and the perfection of the things of this sort. And it is these
who took form with him, but according to the image of the Pleroma, having their fathers who are the ones who gave them life, each one being a copy of each one of the faces, which are forms of maleness, since they are not from the illness which is femaleness, but are from this one who already has left behind the sickness. It has the name “the Church,” for in harmony they resemble the harmony in the assembly of those who have revealed themselves.

That which came into being in the image of the light, it too is perfect, inasmuch as it is an image of the one existing light, which is the Totalities. Even if it was inferior to the one of whom it is an image, nevertheless it has its indivisibility, because it is a countenance of the indivisible light. Those, however, who came into being in the image of each one of the aeons, they in essence are in the one whom we previously mentioned, but in power they are not equal, because it (the power) is in each of them. In this mingling with one another they have equality, but each one has not cast off what is peculiar to itself. Therefore, they are passions, for passion is sickness, since they are productions not of the agreement of the Pleroma, but of this one, prematurely, before he received the Father. Hence, the agreement with his Totality and will was something beneficial for the organization which was to come. It was granted them to pass through the places which are below, since the places are unable to accommodate their sudden, hasty coming, unless (they come) individually, one by one. Their coming is necessary, since by them will everything be perfected.

In short, the Logos received the vision of all things, those which pre-exist and those which are now and those which will be, since he has been entrusted with the organization of all that which exists. Some things are already in things which are fit for coming into being, but the seeds which are to be he has within himself, because of the promise which belonged to that which he conceived, as something belonging to seeds which are to be. And he produced his offspring, that is, the revelation of that which he conceived. For a while, however, the seed of promise is guarded, so that those who have been appointed for a mission might be appointed by the coming of the Savior and of those who are with him, the ones who are first in knowledge and glory of the Father.
10. The Organization

It is fitting, from 96 the prayer which he made and the 1 conversion which occurred because of it, 1 that some should perish 1 while others benefit 5 and still others be 1 set apart. He first prepared 1 the punishment of those who are 1 disobedient, making use of a power 1 of the one who appeared, the one from whom he received 10 authority over all things, 1 so as to be separate from him. He is 1 the one who is below and he also keeps himself 1 apart from that which is exalted, until he 1 prepares the organization of all those things 15 which are external, and gives to each the place 1 which is assigned to it. 1

The Logos established him(self) at 1 first, when he beautified the Totalities, as 1 a basic principle and cause 20 and ruler of the things which 1 came to be, like the Father, the one who 1 was the cause of the establishment, 1 which was the first to exist after him. 1 He created the pre-existent images, 25 which he brought forth 1 in thanks and glorification. Then 1 he beautified the place of those whom he had 1 brought forth in glory, which is called 1 "Paradise" and 30 "the Enjoyment" and "the Joy full 1 of sustenance" and "the Joy," which 1 pre-exist. And of 1 every goodness which exists in 1 the Pleroma, it preserves the image. 35 Then he beautified the kingdom, 1 like a city 1 filled with everything pleasing, 1 which is brotherly love and 1 the great generosity, which is filled 97 with the holy spirits and [the] 1 mighty powers which govern 1 them, which the Logos 1 produced and established 5 in power. Then (he beautified) the place of 1 the Church which assembles in this place, 1 having the form of the 1 Church which exists in the aeons, which glorifies 1 the Father. After these (he beautified) the place 10 of the faith and obedience (which arises) from 1 hope, which things the Logos received 1 when the light appeared; 1 then (he beautified the place of) the disposition, which is prayer [and] 1 supplication, which were followed by forgiveness 15 and the word concerning 1 the one who would appear.

All the spiritual places 1 are in spiritual power. 1 They are separate from the beings 1 of the thought, since the power is established in 20 an image, which is that which separates 1 the Pleroma from the Logos, while the power 1 which is active in prophesying about 1 the things which will be, directs the beings of the thought 1 which have come into being toward that which is pre-existent, 25 and it does not permit them to mix with the things which 1 have come into being through a vision of the things which are 1 with him.
The beings of the thought which 1 is outside are humble; they 1 preserve the representation of the pleromatic, 30 especially because of the sharing 1 in the names by which they are beautiful. 1

The conversion is 1 humble toward the beings of the thought, and the law, 1 too, is humble toward them, 35 (the law) of the judgment, which is the condemnation and 1 the wrath. Also humble toward them 1 is the power which separates those who 1 fall below them, sends them 1 far off and does not allow them 98 [to] spread out over the beings of the thought and 1 the conversion, which (power) consists in fear and 1 perplexity and forgetfulness and astonishment and 1 ignorance and the things which have come into being 5 in the manner of a likeness, through phantasy. 1 And these things, too, which were in fact lowly, 1 are given the exalted names. 1 There is no knowledge for those who have come 1 forth from them with arrogance 10 and lust for power 1 and disobedience and falsehood. 1

To each one he gave 1 a name, since the two orders are 1 in a name. Those belonging to the thought and those of the representation 15 are called 1 "the Right Ones" and "Psychic" and 1 "the Fiery Ones" and "the Middle Ones." 1 Those who belong to the arrogant thought and those of the likeness 1 are called "the Left," 20 "Hylic," "the Dark Ones," and "the Last." 1

After the Logos established 1 each one in his order, 1 both the images and the representations and the likenesses, 1 he kept the aeon of the images 25 pure from all those who 1 fight against it, since it is a place of joy. 1 However, to those of the thought he revealed 1 the thought which he had stripped 1 from himself, desiring to draw them 30 into a material union, for the sake 1 of their system and dwelling place 1 and in order that they might also bring forth 1 an impulse for diminution from 1 their attraction to evil, so that they might not any more 35 rejoice in the glory 1 of their environment and be dissolved, 1 but might rather see 1 their sickness in which they suffer, 99 so that they might beget love 1 and continuous searching after 1 the one who is able to heal them 1 of the inferiority. Also over those 5 who belong to the likeness, he set 1 the word of beauty, so that he might 1 bring them into a form. He also set 1 over them the law of judgment. 1 Again, he set over them [the] 10 powers which the roots had produced 1 [in] their lust for power. He [appointed] 1 them as rulers over them, so that 1 either by the support of the word which is beautiful 1 or by the threat of the [law] 15 or by the power of lust for 1 power the order might be preserved 1 from those who have reduced it to evil, 1 while the Logos is pleased with them, 1 since they are useful for the organization.
The Logos knows the agreement in the lust for power of the two orders. To these and to all the others, he graciously granted their desire. He gave to each one the appropriate rank, and it was ordered that each one be a ruler over a place and an activity. He yields to the place of the one more exalted than himself, in order to command the other places in an activity which is in the allotted activity which falls to him to have control over because of his mode of being. As a result, there are commanders and subordinates in positions of domination and subjection among the angels and archangels, while the activities are of various types and are different. Each one of the archons with his race and his perquisites to which his lot has claim, just as they appeared, each was on guard, since they have been entrusted with the organization and none lacks a command and none is without kingship from the end of the heavens to the end of the [earth], even to the foundations of the [earth] and to the places beneath the earth. There are kings, there are lords and those who give commands, some for administering punishment, others for administering justice, still others for giving rest and healing, others for teaching, others for guarding.

Over all the archons he appointed an Archon with no one commanding him. He is the lord of all of them; that is, the countenance which the Logos brought forth in his thought as a representation of the Father of the Totalities. Therefore, he is adorned with every which is a representation of him, since he is characterized by every property and glorious quality. For he too is called "father" and "god" and " demiurge" and "king" and "judge" and "place" and " dwelling" and "law."

The Logos uses him as a hand, to beautify and work on the things below and he uses him as a mouth, to say the things which will be prophesied.

The things which he has spoken he does. When he saw that they were great and good and wonderful, he was pleased and rejoiced, as if he himself in his own thought had been the one to say them and do them, not knowing that the movement within him is from the spirit who moves him in a determined way toward those things which he wants.

In regard to the things which came into being from him, he spoke of them and they came into being as a representation of the spiritual places which we mentioned previously in the discussion about the images.
Not only did he work, but also, as the one who is appointed as father of his organization, he engendered by himself and by the seeds, yet also by the spirit which is elect and which will descend through him to the places which are below. Not only does he speak spiritual words of his own, but in an invisible way, (he speaks) through the spirit which calls out and begets things greater than his own essence.

Since in his essence he is a “god” and “father” [and] all the rest of the honorific titles, he was thinking that they were elements of his own essence. He established a rest for those who obey him, but for those who disobey him, he also established punishments. With him, too, there is a paradise and a kingdom and everything else which exists in the aeon which exists before him. They are more valuable than the imprints, because of the thought which is connected with them, which is like 102 a shadow and a garment, so to speak, because he does not see in what way the things which exist actually do exist.

He established workers and servants, assisting in what he will do and what he will say, for in every place where he worked he left his countenance in his beautiful name, effecting and speaking of the things which he thinks about.

He established in his place images of the light which appeared and of those things which are spiritual, though they were of his own essence. For, thus they were honored in every place by him, being pure, from the countenance of the one who appointed them, and they were established: paradises and kingdoms and rests and promises and multitudes of servants of his will, and though they are lords of dominions, they are set beneath the one who is lord, the one who appointed them.

After he listened to him in this way, properly, about the lights, which are the source and the system, he set them over the beauty of the things below. The invisible spirit moved him in this way, so that he would wish to administer through his own servant, whom he too used, as a hand and as a mouth and as if he were his face, (and his servant is) the things which he brings, order and threat and fear, in order that those [with] whom he has done what is ignorant might despise the order which was given for them to keep, since they are fettered in the bonds of the archons which are on them [securely].

The whole establishment of matter is divided into three. The [strong] powers which the spiritual Logos brought forth from phan-
tasy and arrogance, he established in the first spiritual rank. Then those (powers) which these produced by their lust for power, he set in the middle area, since they are powers of ambition, so that they might exercise dominion and give commands with compulsion and force to the establishment which is beneath them. Those which came into being through envy and jealousy and all the other offspring from dispositions of this sort, he set in a servile order controlling the extremities, commanding all those which exist and all (the realm of) generation, from whom come rapidly destroying illnesses, who eagerly desire begetting, who are something in the place where they are from and to which they will return. And therefore, he appointed over them authoritative powers, acting [continuously] on matter, in order that the offspring of those which exist might also exist continuously. For this is their glory.

Part II

11. The Creation of Material Humanity

The matter which flows through its form (is) a cause by which the invisibility which exists through the powers [...] for them all, for [...] as they beget before them and [destroy.] The thought which is set between those of the right [and] those of the left is a power of [begetting]. All those which the [first ones] will wish to make, so to speak, a projection of theirs, like a shadow cast from and following a body, those things which are the roots of the visible creations, namely, the entire preparation of the adornment of the images and representations and likenesses, have come into being because of those who need education and teaching and formation, so that the smallness might grow, little by little, as through a mirror image. For it was for this reason that he created mankind at the end, having first prepared and provided for him the things which he had created for his sake.

Like that of all else is the creation of mankind as well. The spiritual Logos moved him invisibly, as he perfected him through the Demiurge and his angelic servants, who shared in the act of fashioning in [multitudes, when he] took counsel with his archons. Like a shadow is earthly man, so that he might be like [those] who are cut off from the Totalities. Also he is something prepared by all of them,
those of the right and those of the left, since each one in [the] orders gives a form to the [...], in which it exists.

The [...] which the Logos [who was] defective brought forth, who [was] in the sickness, did not resemble him because he brought it forth [forgetfully,] ignorantly, and [defectively,] and in all the other weak ways, although the Logos gave the first form through the Demiurge out of ignorance, so that he would learn that the exalted one exists and would know that he needs [him]. This is what the prophet called "Living Spirit" and "Breath of the exalted aeons" and "[the] Invisible" and this is the living soul which has given life to the power which was dead at first. For that which is dead is ignorance.

It is fitting that we explain about the soul of the first human being, that it is from the spiritual Logos, while the creator thinks that it is his, since it is from him, as from a mouth through which one breathes. The creator also sent down souls from his substance, since he, too, has a power of procreation, because he is something which has come into being from the representation of the Father. Also those of the left brought forth, as it were, men of their own, since they have the likeness of <being).

The spiritual substance is a single thing and a single representation, and its weakness is the determination in many forms. As for the substance of the psychics, its determination is double, since it has the knowledge and the confession of the exalted one, and it is not inclined to evil, because of the inclination of the thought. As for the material substance its way is different and in many forms, and it was a weakness which existed in many types of inclination.

The first human being is a mixed formation, and a mixed creation, and a deposit of those of the left and those of the right, and a spiritual word whose attention is divided between each of the two substances from which he takes his being. Therefore, it is said that a paradise was planted for him, so that he might eat of the food of three kinds of tree, since it is a garden of the threefold order, and since it is that which gives enjoyment.

The noble elect substance which is in him was more exalted. It created and it did not wound them. Therefore they issued a command, making a threat and bringing upon him a great danger, which is death. Only the enjoyment of the things which are evil did he allow him to taste, and from the other tree with the double (fruit) he did not allow him to eat, much less from the tree of life, so that
[they would not] 1 acquire honor [ . . . ] 1 them and so that [they would not be . . .] 10 by the evil power [which] 1 is called "the serpent." And he is more cunning 1 than all the evil powers. 1 He led man astray [through] 1 the determination of those things which belong to the thought 15 and the desires. <He> made him transgress 1 the command, so that he would die. 1 And he was expelled from 1 every enjoyment of that place.

This is the expulsion which was made 20 for him, when he was expelled from the enjoyments 1 of the things which belong to the likeness and those of the representation. 1 It was a work of providence, so that 1 it might be found that it is a short time 1 until man will receive the enjoyment 25 of the things which are eternally good, 1 in which is the place of rest. 1 This the spirit ordained when 1 he first planned 1 that man should experience the 30 great evil, which is death, 1 that is complete ignorance of the Totality, 1 and that he should experience 1 all the evils which 1 come from this and, 35 after the deprivations and cares which are in these, 1 that he should receive of the greatest 108 good, which is 1 life eternal, that is, 1 firm knowledge of the Totalities 1 and the reception of all good things. 5 Because of the transgression of the first man 1 death ruled. It was accustomed 1 to slay every man 1 in the manifestation of its 1 [domination] which had been given it 10 as a kingdom, because of the organization 1 of the Father's will, 1 of which we spoke previously.

Part III

12. The Variety of Theologies

If both the orders, 1 those on the right and those on the left, 15 are brought together with one another by 1 the thought which is set between them, 1 which gives them their organization 1 with each other, it happens 1 that they both act with the same 20 emulation of their deeds, with 1 those of the right resembling those of the left 1 and those of the left resembling 1 those of the right. And if at times the evil order 1 begins to do 25 evil in a 1 foolish way, 1 the <wise> order emulates, 1 in the form of a man of violence, 1 also doing what is evil, 30 as if it were a power of a man 1 of violence. At other times 1 the foolish order 1 attempts to do good, 1 making itself like it, since the hidden order, 35 too, is zealous to do it. 1 Just as it is in 1 the things which are established, [so] (it is) in the 109 things which have come to be. Since they bring 1 things unlike
one another, those who were not instructed were unable to know the cause of the things which exist. Therefore, they have introduced other types (of explanation), some saying that it is according to providence that the things which exist have their being. These are the people who observe the stability and the conformity of the movement of creation. Others say that it is something alien. These are people who observe the diversity and the lawlessness and the evil of the powers. Others say that the things which exist are what is destined to happen. These are the people who were occupied with this matter. Others say that it is something in accordance with nature. Others say that it is a self-existent. The majority, however, all who have reached as far as the visible elements, do not know anything more than them.

Those who were wise among the Greeks and the barbarians have advanced to the powers which have come into being by way of imagination and vain thought. Those who have come from these, in accord with the mutual conflict and rebellious manner active in them, also spoke in a likely, arrogant and imaginary way concerning the things which they thought of as wisdom, although the likeness deceived them, since they thought that they had attained the truth, when they had (only) attained error. (They did so) not simply in minor appellations, but the powers themselves seem to hinder them, as if they were the Totality. Therefore, the order was caught up in fighting itself alone, because of the arrogant hostility of one [of the offspring] of the archon who is superior, who exists before him. Therefore, nothing was in agreement with its fellows, nothing, neither philosophy nor types of medicine nor types of rhetoric nor types of music nor types of logic, but they are opinions and theories. Ineffability held sway in confusion, because of the indescribable quality of those who hold sway, who give them thoughts.

Now, as for the things which came forth from the race of the Hebrews, things which are written by the hylicks who speak in the fashion of the Greeks, the powers of those who think about all of them, so to speak, the "right ones," the powers which move them all to think of words and a representation, they brought them, and they grasped so as to attain the truth and used the confused powers which act in them. Afterwards they attained to the order of the unmixed ones, the one which is established, the unity which exists as a representation of the representation of the Father. It is not invisible in its nature, but a wisdom envelops it, so that it might preserve the form of the truly invisible one. Therefore, many angels have not been able
to see it. \[\text{I}\] Also, other men of \[\text{I}\] the Hebrew race, of whom we \[\text{I}\] already spoke, namely the righteous ones \[\text{I}\] and the prophets, did not think of anything \[\text{I}\] and did not say anything \[\text{I}\] from imagination or through a \[\text{I}\] likeness or from esoteric thinking, \[\text{I}\] but each one \[\text{I}\] by the power which was at work in him, \[\text{I}\] and while listening to the things which he saw \[\text{I}\] and heard, spoke of them in \[\ldots\]. \[\text{I}\] They have a unified harmony \[\text{I}\] with one another after the manner \[\text{I}\] of those who worked in them, \[\text{I}\] since they preserve the connection and the \[\text{I}\] mutual harmony primarily \[\text{I}\] by the confession of the one more exalted \[\text{I}\] than they. And there is one who is greater than they, \[\text{I}\] who was appointed since they have need \[\text{I}\] of him, and whom the spiritual Logos \[\text{I}\] begot along with them as one who needs \[\text{I}\] the exalted one, in hope and \[\text{I}\] expectation in accord with the thought which \[\text{I}\] is the seed of salvation. \[\text{I}\] And he is an illuminating word, which \[\text{I}\] consists of the thought and his offspring and \[\text{I}\] his emanations. Since the righteous ones and \[\text{I}\] the prophets, whom we have previously mentioned, \[\text{I}\] preserve the confession and the \[\text{I}\] testimony concerning \[\text{I}\] the one who is great, made by their fathers who were \[\text{I}\] looking for the hope and \[\text{I}\] the hearing, in them is sown \[\text{I}\] the seed of prayer and the searching, \[\text{I}\] which is sown in many \[\text{I}\] who have searched for strengthening. \[\text{I}\] It appears and draws them to \[\text{I}\] love the exalted one, to proclaim \[\text{I}\] these things as pertaining to a unity. \[\text{I}\] And it was a unity which \[\text{I}\] worked in them when they spoke. \[\text{I}\] Their vision and their words do not differ \[\text{I}\] because of the multitude \[\text{I}\] of those who have given them the vision and \[\text{I}\] the word. Therefore, those who have \[\text{I}\] listened to what they have said \[\text{I}\] concerning this do not reject any \[\text{I}\] of it, but have accepted the scriptures \[\text{I}\] in an altered way. By interpreting \[\text{I}\] them they established \[\text{I}\] many heresies which \[\text{I}\] exist to the present among the \[\text{I}\] Jews. Some \[\text{I}\] say that God is one, \[\text{I}\] who made a proclamation \[\text{I}\] in the ancient scriptures. Others \[\text{I}\] say that he is many. \[\text{I}\] Some say \[\text{I}\] that God is simple \[\text{I}\] and was a single mind \[\text{I}\] in nature. Others say \[\text{I}\] that his activity is linked with \[\text{I}\] the establishment of good \[\text{I}\] and evil. Still others \[\text{I}\] say that he is the \[\text{I}\] creator of that which has come into being. Still others \[\text{I}\] say that it \[\text{I}\] was by the angels that he created.

The multitude of ideas of \[\text{I}\] this sort is the multitude of forms and the abundance \[\text{I}\] of types of scripture, that which produced \[\text{I}\] their teachers of the Law. The \[\text{I}\] prophets, however, did not say anything of \[\text{I}\] their own accord, \[\text{I}\] but each one of them \[\text{I}\] (spoke) of the things which he had seen and \[\text{I}\] heard through the proclamation of \[\text{I}\] the Savior. This is what he proclaimed, \[\text{I}\] with the main subject of their \[\text{I}\] proclamation being that which each said concerning \[\text{I}\] the coming of the Savior, which is this
coming. Sometimes the prophets speak about it as if it will be. Sometimes (it is) as if the Savior speaks from their mouths, saying that the Savior will come and show favor to those who have not known him. They have not all joined with one another in confessing anything, but each one, on the basis of the thing from which he received power to speak about him and on the basis of the place which he saw, thinks that it is from it that he will be begotten and that he will come from that place. Not one of them knew whence he would come nor by whom he would be begotten, but he alone is the one of whom it is worthy to speak, the one who will be begotten and will suffer. Concerning that which he previously was and that which he is eternally, an unbegotten, impassible one from the Logos, who came into being in flesh, he did not come into their thought. And this is the account which they received an impulse to give concerning his flesh which was to appear. They say that it is a production from all of them, but that before all things it is from the spiritual Logos who is the cause of the things which have come into being, from whom the Savior received his flesh. He had conceived it at the revelation of the light, according to the word of the promise, at his revelation from the seminal state. For the one who exists is not a seed of the things which exist, since he was begotten at the end. But to the one by whom the Father ordained the manifestation of salvation, who is the fulfillment of the promise, to him belonged all these instruments for entry into life, through which he descended. His Father is one and alone is truly a father to him, the invisible, unknowable, incomprehensible in his nature, who alone is God in his will and his form, who has granted that he might be seen, known and comprehended.

13. The Incarnate Savior and his Companions

He it is who was our Savior in willing compassion, who is that which they were. For it was for their sake that he became manifest in an involuntary suffering. They became flesh and soul, that is, eternally which (things) hold them and with corruptible things they die. And as for those who [came into being] [the] invisible one taught them invisibly about himself.

Not only did he take upon himself the death of those whom he thought to save, but he also accepted their smallness to which they had descended when they were born in body and soul. (He did so),
because he had let himself be conceived and born as an infant, in body and soul.

Among all the others who shared in them and those who fell and received the light, he came being exalted, because he had let himself be conceived without sin, stain and defilement. He was begotten in life, being in life because the former and the latter are in passion and changing opinion from the Logos who moved, who established them to be body and soul. He it is who has taken to himself the one who came from those whom we previously mentioned.

He came into being from the glorious vision and the unchanging thought of the Logos who returned to himself, after his movement, from the organization, just as those who came with him took body and soul and a confirmation and stability and judgment of things. They too intended to come.

When they thought of the Savior they came, and [they came] when he knew; they also came more exalted in the emanation according to the flesh than those who had been brought forth from a defect, because in this way they, too, received their bodily emanation along with the body of the Savior, through the revelation and the mingling with him. These others were those of one substance and it indeed is the spiritual (substance). The organization is different. This is one thing, that is another. Some come forth from passion and division, needing healing. Others are from prayer, so that they heal the sick, when they have been appointed to treat those who have fallen. These are the apostles and the evangelists. They are the disciples of the Savior, and teachers who need instruction. Why, then, did they, too, share in the passions in which those who have been brought forth from passion share, if indeed they are bodily productions in accordance with the organization and (the) Savior, who did not share in the passions?

The Savior was an image of the unitary one, he who is the Totality in bodily form. Therefore, he preserved the form of indivisibility, from which comes impassibility. They, however, are images of each thing which became manifest. Therefore, they assume division from the pattern, having taken form for the planting which exists beneath [the heaven.] This also is what shares in the evil which exists in the places which they have reached. For the will held the Totality under sin, so that by that will he might have mercy on the Totality and they might be saved, while a single one alone is appointed to give life and all the rest need salvation. Therefore, it was from (reasons)
of this sort that it began to receive grace to give the honors which were proclaimed by Jesus, which were suitable for him to proclaim to the rest, since a seed of the promise of Jesus Christ was set up, whom we have served in (his) revelation and union. Now the promise possessed the instruction and the return to what they are from the first, from which they possess the drop, so as to return to him, which is that which is called "the redemption." And it is the release from the captivity and the acceptance of freedom. In its places the captivity of those who were slaves of ignorance holds sway. The freedom is the knowledge of the truth which existed before the ignorance was ruling, forever without beginning and without end, being something good and a salvation of things and a release from the servile nature in which they have suffered.

Those who have been brought forth in a lowly thought of vanity, that is, (a thought) which goes to things which are evil through the thought which draws them down to the lust for power, these have received the possession which is freedom, from the abundance of the grace which looked upon the children. It was, however, a disturbance of the passion and a destruction of those things which he cast off from himself at first, when the Logos separated them from himself, (the Logos) who was the cause of their being destined for destruction, though he kept them at the end of the organization and allowed them to exist because even they were useful for the things which were ordained.

14. The Tripartition of Mankind

Mankind came to be in three essential types, the spiritual, the psychic and the material, conforming to the triple disposition of the Logos, from which were brought forth the material ones and the psychic ones and the spiritual ones. Each of the three essential types is known by its fruit. And they were not known at first but only at the coming of the Savior, who shone upon the saints and revealed what each was.

The spiritual race, being like light from light and like spirit from spirit, when its head appeared, it ran toward him immediately. It immediately became a body of its head. It suddenly received knowledge in the revelation. The psychic race is like light from a fire, since it hesitated to accept knowledge of him who appeared to it. (It hesitated) even more to run toward him in faith. Rather, through a
voice it was instructed and this was sufficient, since it is not far from the hope according to the promise, since it received, so to speak as a pledge, the assurance of the things which were to be. The material race, however, is alien in every way; since it is dark, it shuns the shining of the light because its appearance destroys it. And since it has not received its unity, it is something excessive and hateful toward the Lord at his revelation.

The spiritual race will receive complete salvation in every way. The material will receive destruction in every way, just as one who resists him. The psychic race, since it is in the middle when it is brought forth and also when it is created, is double according to its determination for both good and evil. It takes its appointed departure suddenly and its complete escape to those who are good. Those whom the Logos brought forth in accordance with the first element of his thought, when he remembered the exalted one and prayed for salvation, have salvation [suddenly.] They will be saved completely because of the salvific thought. As he was brought forth, so, [too], were these brought forth from him, whether angels or men. In accordance with the confession that there is one who is more exalted than themselves, and in accordance with the prayer and the search for him, they also will attain the salvation of those who have been brought forth, since they are from the disposition which is good. They were appointed for service in proclaiming the coming of the Savior who was to be and his revelation which had come. Whether angels or men, when he was sent as a service to them, they received, in fact, the essence of their being. Those, however, who are from the thought of lust for power, who have come into being from the blow of those who fight against him, those whom the thought brought forth, from these, since they are mixed, they will receive their end suddenly. Those who will be brought forth from the lust for power which is given to them for a time and for certain periods, and who will give glory to the Lord of glory, and who will relinquish their wrath, they will receive the reward for their humility, which is to remain forever. Those, however, who are proud because of the desire of ambition, and who love temporary glory and who forget that it was only for certain periods and times which they have that they were entrusted with power, and for this reason did not acknowledge that the Son of God is the Lord of all and Savior, and were not brought out of wrath and the resemblance to the evil ones, they will receive judgment for their ignorance and their senselessness, which is
suffering, along with those who went astray, anyone of them who turned away; and even more (for) wickedness in doing to the Lord things which were not fitting, which the powers of the left did to him, even including his death. They persevered saying, "We shall become rulers of the universe, if the one who has been proclaimed king of the universe is slain," (they said this) when they labored to do this, namely the men and angels who are not from the good disposition of the right ones but from the mixture. And they first chose for themselves honor, though it was only a temporary wish and desire, while the path to eternal rest is by way of humility for salvation of those who will be saved, those of the right ones. After they confess the Lord and the thought of that which is pleasing to the church and the song of those who are humble along with her to the full extent possible, in that which is pleasing to do for her, in sharing in her sufferings and her pains in the manner of those who understand what is good for the church, they will have a share in [her] hope. This is to be said on the subject of how men and angels who are from the order of the left have a path to error: not only did they deny the Lord and plot evil against him, but also toward the Church did they direct their hatred and envy and jealousy; and this is the reason for the condemnation of those who have moved and have aroused themselves for the trials of the Church.

15. The Process of Restoration

The election shares body and essence with the Savior, since it is like a bridal chamber because of its unity and its agreement with him. For, before every place, the Christ came for her sake. The calling, however, has the place of those who rejoice at the bridal chamber and who are glad and happy at the union of the bridegroom and the bride. The place which the calling will have is the aeon of the images, where the Logos has not yet joined with the Pleroma. And since the man of the Church was happy and glad at this, as he was hoping for it, he separated spirit, soul, and body in the organization of the one who thinks that he is a unity, though within him is the man who is the Totality — and he is all of them. And, though he has the escape from the which the places will receive, he also has the members about which we spoke earlier. When the redemption was proclaimed, the perfect man received knowledge immediately, so as to return in haste to his unitary state, to the place from which
he came, to return joyfully, to the place from which he came, to the place from which he flowed forth. His members, however, needed a place of instruction, which is in the places which are adorned, so that they might receive from them resemblance to the images and archetypes, like a mirror, until all the members of the body of the Church are in a single place and receive the restoration at one time, when they have been manifested as the whole body, namely the restoration into the Pleroma. It has a preliminary concord with a mutual agreement, which is the concord which belongs to the Father, until the Totalities receive a countenance in accordance with him. The restoration is at the end, after the Totality reveals what it is, the Son, who is the redemption, that is, the path toward the incomprehensible Father, that is, the return to the pre-existent, and (after) the Totalities reveal themselves in that one, in the proper way, who is the inconceivable one and the ineffable one, and the invisible one and the incomprehensible one, so that it receives redemption. It was not only release from the domination of the left ones, nor was it only [escape] from the power of those of the right, to each of which we thought that were slaves and sons, from whom none escapes without quickly becoming theirs again, but the redemption also is an ascent to the degrees which are in the Pleroma and those who have named themselves and who conceive of themselves according to the power of each of the aeons, and (it is) an entrance into what is silent, where there is no need for voice nor for knowing nor for forming a concept nor for illumination, but (where) all things are light, while they do not need to be illumined.

Not only do humans need redemption, but also the angels, too, need redemption along with the image and the rest of the Pleromas of the aeons and the wondrous powers of illumination. So that we might not be in doubt in regard to the others, even the Son himself, who has the position of redeemer of the Totality, [needed] redemption as well, — he who had become man, — since he gave himself for each thing which we need, we in the flesh, who are his Church. Now, when he first received redemption from the word which had descended upon him, all the rest received redemption from him, namely those who had taken him to themselves. For those who received the one who had received (redemption) also received what was in him.

Among the men who are in the flesh redemption began to be given, his first-born, and his love, the Son who was incarnate, while the angels who are in heaven asked to associate, so that they might form
an association 1 with him upon the earth. Therefore, 1 he is called "the Redemption 20 of the angels of the Father," he who 1 comforted those who were laboring 1 under the Totality for his knowledge, 1 because he was given the grace 1 before anyone else.

The Father had foreknowledge 25 of him, since he was 1 in his thought before 1 anything came into being and since he had 1 those to whom he has revealed him. 1 He set the deficiency on the one who 30 remains for certain periods and times, 1 as a glory for his Pleroma, since 1 the fact that he is unknown 1 is a cause 1 of his production from his 35 agreement [. . .] 126 of him. Just as reception of 1 knowledge of him is a manifestation of his lack 1 of envy and the revelation 1 of the abundance of his sweetness, 5 which is the second glory, 1 so, too, he has been found 1 to be a cause 1 of ignorance, although he is also 1 a begetter of knowledge.

In a 10 hidden and incomprehensible wisdom 1 he kept the knowledge to the end, 1 until the Totalities became weary while searching for 1 God the Father, whom no one 1 found through his own wisdom 15 or power. 1 He gives himself, so that they might receive knowledge of the abundant thought about 1 his great glory, which 1 he has given, and (about) the cause, which he has 1 given, which is his unceasing thanksgiving, 20 he who, from 1 the immobility of his counsel, 1 reveals himself eternally 1 to those who have been worthy of the Father 1 who is unknown in his nature, so that they 25 might receive knowledge of him, through his desire 1 that they should come to experience the 1 ignorance and its pains. 1

Those of whom he first thought 1 that they should attain knowledge and 30 the good things which are in it, 1 they were planning - which is the wisdom 1 of the Father, - that they might experience 1 the evil things and might 1 train themselves in them, 35 as a [. . .] for a time, 1 [so that they might] receive the enjoyment 1 [of good things] for 1 eternity. 127 They hold change and 1 persistent renunciation and the 1 cause of those who fight against them as an adornment 1 and marvelous quality of those who 5 are exalted, so that it is manifest 1 that the ignorance of 1 those who will be ignorant of the Father was 1 something of their own. He who gave them 1 knowledge of him was one of his powers 10 for enabling them to grasp that 1 knowledge in the fullest sense is 1 called "the knowledge of 1 all that which is thought of" and "the 1 treasure" and "the addition for the 15 increase of knowledge," "the revelation 1 of those things which were known at first," 1 and "the path toward harmony 1 and toward the 1 pre-existent one," which is the 20 increase of those who have 1 abandoned the greatness which was theirs 1
in the organization of the will, so that the end might be like the beginning. 25

As for the baptism which exists in the fullest sense, into which the Totalities will descend and in which they will be, there is no other baptism apart from this one alone, 30 which is the redemption into God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, when confession is made through faith in those names, 35 which are a single name of the gospel, 128 when they have come to believe what has been said to them, namely that they exist. From this they have their salvation, those who have believed that they exist. This is attaining in an invisible way to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in an undoubting faith. And when they have borne witness to them, it is also with a firm hope that they attained them, so that the return to them might become the perfection of those who have believed in them and (so that) the Father might be one with them, the Father, the God, whom they have confessed in faith and who gave (them) their union with him in knowledge.

The baptism which we previously mentioned is called “garment of those who do not strip themselves of it,” for those who will put it on and those who have received redemption wear it. It is also called “the confirmation of the truth which has no fall.” In an unwavering and immovable way it grasps those who have received the [restoration] 30 while they grasp it. (Baptism) is called “silence” because of the quiet and the tranquility. It is also called “bridal chamber” because of the agreement and the indivisible state of those who know they have known him. It is also called 129 “the light which does not set and is without flame,” since it does not give light, but those who have worn it are made into light. They are the ones whom he wore. (Baptism) is also called, “the eternal life,” which is immortality; and it is called “that which is, entirely, simply, 10 in the proper sense, what is pleasing, inseparably and irremovably and faultlessly and imperturbably, for the one who exists for those who have received a beginning.” For, what else is there to name it apart from “God,” since it is the Totalities, that is, even if it is given numberless names, they are spoken simply as a reference to it. Just as he transcends every word and he transcends every voice and he transcends every mind and he transcends everything and he transcends every silence, so it is [Dittography] with those who are that which he is. This is that which they find it to be, ineffably and inconceivably in (its) visage, for the coming into being in those who know, through him whom they have comprehended, who is the one to whom they gave glory.
16. Redemption of the Calling

Even if on the matter of the election 130 there are many more things for 1 us to say, as it is fitting to 1 say, nonetheless, on the 1 matter of those of the calling — for 5 those of the right are so named 1 — it is necessary 1 for us to return once again to them 1 and it is not profitable 1 for us to forget them. We have spoken 10 about them, — If there is enough in 1 what preceded at some length, how have we 1 spoken? In a partial way, — 1 since I said about all those who came 1 forth from the Logos, 15 either from the judgment of 1 the evil ones or from 1 the wrath which fights against them and the 1 turning away from them, which 1 is the return to 20 the exalted ones, or from the prayer and 1 the remembrance of those who pre-existed 1 or from hope and 1 faith that [they] would receive their salvation 1 from good work 25 since they have been deemed worthy because 1 they are beings from the good 1 dispositions, (that) they have 1 cause of their begetting 1 which is an opinion from the one who 30 exists. Still further (I said) that before the 1 Logos concerned himself with 1 them in an invisible way, 1 willingly, the exalted one added 1 to this thought, because 35 they were [in need] of him, 131 who was the cause of 1 their being. They did not exalt themselves, 1 when they were saved, as if there were nothing 1 existing before them, but they 5 confess that they have a beginning 1 to their existence and they 1 desire this: to know him 1 who exists before them. 1 Most of all (I said) that they worshipped 10 the revelation of the light 1 in the form of lightning and 1 they bore witness that it appeared 1 as (their) salvation. 1

Not only those who have come forth 15 from the Logos, about whom 1 alone we said that 1 they would accomplish the good work, 1 but also those whom these brought forth 1 according to the good dispositions 20 will share 1 in the repose according to the abundance 1 of the grace. Also those who have been 1 brought forth from the desire 1 of lust for 25 power, having the 1 seed in them which is the 1 lust for power, will receive 1 the reward for (their) good deeds, 1 namely those who acted and those 30 who have the predisposition 1 toward the good, if they 1 intentionally desire and wish 1 to abandon the 1 vain, temporal ambition 35 and [they] keep the commandment of the Lord 132 of glory, instead of the momentary 1 honor, and inherit 1 the eternal kingdom.

Now, 1 it is necessary that we unite 5 the causes and the effects on them 1 of the grace and the impulses, 1 since it is fitting that we say what 1 we mentioned previously about the salvation 1 of all those of the right, 10 of all those unmixed and those mixed, 1 to join them 1 [with] one
another. And as for the repose, [which] is the revelation of [the] form in which they believed, it is necessary that we should treat it with a suitable discussion. For when we confessed the kingdom which is in Christ, we escaped from the whole multiplicity of forms and from inequality and change. For the end will receive a unitary existence just as the beginning is unitary, where there is no male nor female, nor slave and free, nor circumcision and uncircumcision, neither angel nor man, but Christ is all in all. What is the form of the one who did not exist at first? It will be found that he will exist. And what is the nature of the one who was a slave? He will take a place with a free man. For, they will receive the vision more and more by nature and not only by a little word, so as to believe, only through a voice, that this is the way it is, that the restoration to that which used to be is a unity. Even if some are exalted because of the organization, since they have been appointed as causes of the things which have come into being, since they are more active as natural forces and since they are desired because of these things, angels and men will receive the kingdom and the confirmation [and] the salvation. These, then, are the causes.

About the who appeared in flesh they believed without any doubt that he is the Son of the unknown God, who was not previously spoken of and who could not be seen. They abandoned their gods whom they had previously worshipped and the lords who are in heaven and on earth. Before he had taken them up, and while he was still a child, they testified that he had already begun to preach, and when he was in the tomb as a dead man the [angels] thought that he was alive, [receiving] life from the one who had died. They first desired their numerous services and wonders, which were in the temple on their behalf, to be performed continuously as the confession. That is, it can be done on their behalf through their approach to him.

That preparation which they did not accept they rejected because of the one who had not been sent from that place, but [they granted to] Christ, of whom they thought that he exists in [that] place from which they had come along with him, a place of gods and lords whom they served, worshipped and ministered to in the names which they had received on loan. — They were given to the one who is designated by them properly. — However, after his assumption, they had the experience to know that he is their Lord, over whom no one else is lord. They gave him their kingdoms; they rose from
their thrones; they were kept from their crowns. He, however, revealed himself to them, for the reasons which we have already spoken of, their salvation and the [return to a] good thought until [...] companion and the angels [...] and the abundance of good [which they did] with it. Thus, they were entrusted with the services, which benefit the elect, bringing their iniquity up to heaven. They tested them eternally for the lack of humility from the inerrancy of the creation, continuing on their behalf until all come to life and leave life, while their bodies [remain] on earth, serving all their [...], sharing [with them] in their sufferings and tribulations, which were brought upon the saints in [every] place.

As for the servants of the evil one, though evil is worthy of destruction, they are in [...]. But because of the [...] which is above all the worlds, which is their good thought and the fellowship, the Church will remember them as good friends and faithful servants, once she has received redemption [from the one who gives] requital. Then the [grace] which is in the bridal chamber and [...] in her house [...] in this thought of the giving and the one who [...] 136 Christ is the one with her [and the] expectation of the Father of the Totality, since she will produce for them angels as guides and servants.

They will think pleasant thoughts. They are services for her. She will give them their requital for all that which the aeons will think about. He is an emanation from them, so that, just as Christ [did] his will which he brought forth and he exalted the greatnesses of the Church [and] gave them to her, so will she be a thought for [these.] And to men he gives [their] eternal dwelling places, in which they will dwell, [leaving] behind the attraction toward the defect, while the power of the Pleroma pulls them up in the greatness of the generosity and [the] sweetness of the aeon which pre-exists. This is the nature of the entire begetting of those whom he had when he shone on them in a light which he revealed [...]. Just as his [...] which will be [...] so too his lord [while] the change alone is in those who have changed. 137 which [...] by him [...] [...] said, while the hylics will remain until the end for destruction, since they will not give forth for their [names], if [they would] return once again to that which [will not be]. As they were [...] they were not [...] but they were of use in the time that they were [in it] among them, although they were not [...] at first. If [...] to do something else concerning the control which they have of the preparation, [...] before them. —
For though I continually use these words, I have not understood his meaning. — Some [elders . . .] him [greatness.] all [ . . .] angels [ . . .] word and [the sound of] a trumpet he will proclaim the great complete amnesty from the beauteous east, in the bridal chamber which is the love of God the Father [ . . .] according to the power which [ . . .] of the greatness [ . . .] the sweetness of [ . . .] of him, since he reveals himself to the greatnesses [ . . .] his goodness [ . . .] the praise, the dominion, [and] the [glory] through [ . . .] the Lord the Savior, the Redeemer of all those belonging to the one filled with Love, through his Holy Spirit from now through all generations forever and ever. Amen.
THE APOCRYPHON OF JOHN  
(II,1, III,1, IV,1, AND BG 8502,2)  

Introduced and translated by  

FREDERIK WISSE

The Apocryphon of John is an important work of mythological Gnosticism. Using the framework of a revelation delivered by the resurrected Christ to John the son of Zebedee, this tractate offers a remarkably clear description of the creation, fall, and salvation of humanity; the mythological description is developed largely in terms of the early chapters of Genesis. Reports of the church fathers indicate that some of them were familiar with the contents of The Apocryphon of John: the teachings of certain Gnostics described by Irenaeus are very similar to the cosmological teachings of the present tractate. Though Irenaeus apparently did not know The Apocryphon of John in its present form, it is certain that the main teachings of the tractate existed before 185 C.E., the date of Irenaeus' work Against Heresies. The Apocryphon of John was still used in the eighth century by the Audians of Mesopotamia.

The Apocryphon of John supplies answers to two basic questions: What is the origin of evil? How can we escape from this evil world to our heavenly home? The cosmogeny, in spite of its exotic details, also seeks to answer these questions. The highest deity is defined in terms of an abstract Greek concept of perfection, a perfection which excludes all anthropomorphism and all involvement in the world. From this supreme deity emanates a series of light-beings, including Christ and Sophia.

According to The Apocryphon of John, the fall occurs when Sophia desires to bring forth a being without the approval of the great Spirit or her consort. Consequently, she produces the monstrous creator-god Yaldabaoth, who still possesses some of the light-power of his mother. Yaldabaoth creates angels to rule over the world and aid in the creation of man; man himself is fashioned after the perfect Father's image, which was mirrored on the water. Man comes to life when Yaldabaoth is tricked into breathing light-power into him. Thus begins a continuous struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness for the possession of the divine particles in man. The evil powers put man in a material body to keep him imprisoned, and also create woman and sexual desire to spread the particles of light and make escape more difficult. Finally Christ is sent down to save humanity by reminding people of their heavenly origin. Only those who possess this knowledge and have lived ascetic lives can return to the realm of light; the others are reincarnated until they also come to saving knowledge.

Three versions of The Apocryphon of John are known. III,1 and BG,2 represent independent translations into Coptic of a short Greek recension of the work. II,1 and IV,1 are copies of the same Coptic translation of a long Greek recension. The English translation presented here is of the long recension. Page and line
The teaching [of the savior], and [the revelation] of the mysteries, [and the] things hidden in silence, [even these things which] he taught John, [his] disciple.

And it happened one day, when John, [the brother] of James — who are the sons of Zebedee — had come up to the temple, that a Pharisee named Arimanius approached him and said to him, "Where is your master whom you followed?" And he [said] to him, "He has gone to the [place] from which he came." The Pharisee [said to him, "With deception did this Nazarene deceive you (pi.), and he filled [your ears with lies], and closed [your hearts (and) turned you] from the traditions [of your fathers]."

When I, John, [heard these things I turned] away from the temple [to a desert place]. And I grieved greatly in my heart saying, "How was the savior appointed, and why was he sent in to the world by his Father, and who is his Father who sent him, and of what sort is that aeon to which we shall go?" For what did he mean when he said to us, "This aeon to [which you will go is of the type of the [imperishable] aeon,' [but he did not teach] us concerning [the latter of what sort it is]."

Straightway, [while I was contemplating these things,] behold, the heavens opened and the whole creation [which is] below heaven shone, and [the world] was shaken. I was afraid, and behold I saw in the light [a youth who stood] by me. While I looked [at him he became] like an old man. And he [changed his likeness (again) becoming like a servant. There was not a plurality before me, but there was a likeness] with multiple forms in the light, and the [ likenesses] appeared through each other, [and] the [likeness] had three forms.

He said to me, "John, John, why do you doubt, or why [are you] afraid? You are not unfamiliar with this image, are you? — that is, do not [be] timid! — I am the one who is [with you (pl.)] always. I [am the Father], I am the Mother, I am the Son. I am the undefiled and incorruptible one. Now [I have come to teach you] what is [and what was] and what will come to [pass], that [you may know the]
things which are not revealed [and those which are revealed, and to teach you] concerning the [unwavering race of] the perfect [Man]. Now, therefore, lift up your [face, that] you may [receive] the things that I [shall teach you] today, [and] may [tell them to your] fellow spirits who [are from] the [unwavering] race of the perfect [Man]."

[And I asked] to [know it, and he said] to me, "The Monad [is a] monarchy with nothing above it. [It is he who exists] as [God] and Father of everything, [the invisible] One who is above [everything, who exists as] incorruption, which is [in the] pure light into which no [eye] can look.

He [is the] invisible [Spirit] of whom it is not right [to think] of him as a god, or something similar. For he is more than a god, since there is nothing above him, for no one lords it over him. [For he does not exist] in something inferior [to him, since everything] exists in him. (IV 4, 9-10: [For it is he who establishes]) himself. [He is eternal] since he does [not] need [anything]. For [he] is total perfection. [He did not lack anything] that he might be completed by [it; rather] he is always completely perfect in [light]. He is [illimitable] since there is no one [prior to him] to set limits to him. He is unsearchable [since there exists no one prior to him to examine him. He is] immeasurable since there was no one [prior to him to measure] him. [He is invisible since no] [one saw him. He is eternal] since he [exists] eternally. He is [ineffable since] no one was able to comprehend him to speak [about him]. He is unnameable since [there is no one prior to him] to give [him] a name.

He is [immeasurable light] which is pure, holy [(and) immaculate]. He is ineffable [being perfect in] incorruptibility. (He is) [not] in perfection, nor in blessedness, nor in divinity, but he is far superior. He is not corporeal [nor] is he incorporeal. He is neither large [nor] is he small. [There is no] way to say, 'What is his quantity?' or, 'What is his quality?', for no one can [know him]. He is not someone among (other) beings, rather he is far superior. [Not that he is (simply) superior], but his essence does not [partake] in the aeons nor in time. For he who partakes in [an aeon] was prepared beforehand. Time was not apportioned to him, [since] he does not receive anything from another, [for it would be received] on loan. For he who precedes someone does not [lack] that he may receive from [him]. For [rather] it is the latter that looks expectantly at him in his light.

For the [perfection] is majestic. He is pure, immeasurable [mind].
He is an aeon-giving aeon. He is life-giving life. He is a blessedness-giving blessed one. He is knowledge-giving knowledge. He is goodness-giving goodness. He is mercy and redemption-giving mercy. He is grace-giving grace, because he possesses it, but because he gives the immeasurable, incomprehensible light.

How am I to speak with you about him? His aeon is indestructible, at rest and existing in silence, reposing (and) being prior to everything. For he is the head of all the aeons, and it is he who gives them strength in his goodness. For we know not the ineffable things, and we do not understand what is immeasurable, except for him who came forth from him, namely (from) the Father. For it is he who told it to us alone. For it is he who looks at himself in his light which surrounds him, namely the spring of the water of life. And it is he who gives to all the aeons and in every way, (and) who gazes upon his image which he sees in the spring of the Spirit. It is he who puts his desire in his water-light which is in the spring of the pure light-water which surrounds him.

And his thought performed a deed and she came forth, namely she who had appeared before him in the shine of his light. This is the first power which was before all of them (and) which came forth from his mind, She is the forethought of the All — her light shines like his light — the perfect power which is the image of the invisible, virginal Spirit who is perfect. The first power, the glory of Barbelo, the perfect glory in the aeons, the glory of the revelation, she glorified the virginal Spirit and it was she who praised him, because thanks to him she had come forth. This is the first thought, his image; she became the womb of everything for it is she who is prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first man, the holy Spirit, the thrice-male, the thrice-powerful, the thrice-named androgynous one, and the eternal aeon among the invisible ones, and the first to come forth.

"She requested from the invisible, virginal Spirit — that is Barbelo — to give her foreknowledge. And the Spirit consented. And when he had consented, the foreknowledge came forth, and it stood by the forethought; it originates from the thought of the invisible, virginal Spirit. It glorified him and his perfect power, Barbelo, for it was for her sake that it had come into being.

And she requested again to grant her indestructibility, and he consented. When he had consented, indestructibility came forth, and it stood by the thought and the foreknowledge. It glorified the
invisible One and Barbelo, the one for whose sake they had come into being.

"And Barbelo requested to grant her eternal life. And the invisible Spirit consented. And when he had consented, eternal life came forth, and [they attended] and glorified the invisible [Spirit] and Barbelo, the one for whose sake they had come into being.

"And she requested again to grant her truth. And the invisible Spirit consented. (IV 8, 24f.: And [when he had] consented) truth came forth, and they attended and glorified the invisible, excellent Spirit and his Barbelo, the one for whose sake they had come into being.

"This is the pentad of the aeons of the Father, which is the first man, the image of the invisible Spirit; it is the forethought, which is Barbelo, and the thought, and the foreknowledge, and the indestructibility, and the eternal life, and the truth. This is the androgynous pentad of the aeons, which is the decad of the aeons, which is the Father.

"And he looked at Barbelo with the pure light which surrounds the invisible Spirit and (with) his spark, and she conceived from him. He begot a spark of light with a light resembling blessedness. But it does not equal his greatness. This was an only-begotten child of the Mother-Father which had come forth; it is the only offspring, the only-begotten one of the Father, the pure Light.

"And the invisible, virginal Spirit rejoiced over the light which came forth, that which was brought forth first by the first power of his forethought which is Barbelo. And he anointed it with his goodness until it became perfect, not lacking in any goodness, because he had anointed it with the goodness of the invisible Spirit. And it attended him as he poured upon it. And immediately when it had received from the Spirit, it glorified the holy Spirit and the perfect forethought for whose sake it had come forth.

"And it requested to give it a fellow worker, which is the mind, and he consented (IV 10, 14: [gladly]). And when the invisible Spirit had consented, the mind came forth, and it attended Christ glorifying him and Barbelo. And all these came into being in silence.

"And the mind wanted to perform a deed through the word of the invisible Spirit. And his will became a deed and it appeared with the mind; and the light glorified it. And the word followed the will. For because of the word, Christ the divine Autogenes created everything. And the eternal life (and) his will and the mind and the foreknowledge attended and glorified the invisible Spirit and Barbelo, for whose sake they had come into being.
And the holy Spirit completed the divine Autogenes, his son, together with Barbelo, that he may attend the mighty and invisible, virginal Spirit as the divine Autogenes, the Christ whom he had honored with a mighty voice. He came forth through the forethought. And the invisible, virginal Spirit placed the divine Autogenes of truth over everything. And he subjected to him every authority, and the truth which is in him, that he may know the All which had been called with a name exalted above every name. For that name will be mentioned to those who are worthy of it.

For from the light, which is the Christ, and the indestructibility, through the gift of the Spirit the four lights (appeared) from the divine Autogenes. He expected that they might attend him. And the three (are) will, thought, and life. And the four powers (are) understanding, grace, perception, and prudence. And grace belongs to the light- aeon Armozel, which is the first angel. And there are three other aeons with this aeon: grace, truth, and form. And the second light (is) Oriel, who has been placed over the second aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: conception, perception, and memory. And the third light is Daveithai, who has been placed over the third aeon. And there are three other aeons with him: understanding, love, and idea. And the fourth aeon was placed over the fourth light Eleleth. And there are three other aeons with him: perfection, peace, and wisdom. These are the four lights which attend the divine Autogenes, (and) these are the twelve aeons which attend the son of the mighty one, the Autogenes, the Christ, through the will and the gift of the invisible Spirit. And the twelve aeons belong to the son of the Autogenes. And all things were established by the will of the holy Spirit through the Autogenes.

And from the foreknowledge of the perfect mind, through the revelation of the will of the invisible Spirit and the will of the Autogenes, (the) perfect Man (appeared), the first revelation, and the truth. It is he whom the virginal Spirit called Pige-Adamas, and he placed him over the first aeon with the mighty one, the Autogenes, the Christ, by the first light Armozel; and with him are his powers. And the invisible one gave him a spiritual, invincible power. And he spoke and glorified and praised the invisible Spirit, saying, 'It is for thy sake that everything has come into being and everything will return to thee. I shall praise and glorify thee and the Autogenes and the aeons, the three: the Father, the Mother, and the Son, the perfect power.'
"And he placed his son Seth over the second aeon in the presence of the second light Oriel. And in the third aeon the seed of Seth was placed over the third light Daveithai. And the souls of the saints were placed (there). And in the fourth aeon the souls were placed of those who do not know the Pleroma and who did not repent at once, but who persisted for a while and repented afterwards; they are by the fourth light Eleleth. These are creatures which glorify the invisible Spirit.

"And the Sophia of the Epinoia, being an aeon, conceived a thought from herself and the conception of the invisible Spirit and foreknowledge. She wanted to bring forth a likeness out of herself without the consent of the Spirit, — he had not approved — and without her consort, and without his consideration. And though the person of her maleness had not approved, and she had not found her agreement, and she had thought without the consent of the Spirit and the knowledge of her agreement, (yet) she brought forth. And because of the invincible power which is in her, her thought did not remain idle and something came out of her which was imperfect and different from her appearance, because she had created it without her consort. And it was dissimilar to the likeness of its mother for it has another form.

"And when she saw (the consequences of) her desire, it changed into a form of a lion-faced serpent. And its eyes were like lightning fires which flash. She cast it away from her, outside that place, that no one of the immortal ones might see it, for she had created it in ignorance. And she surrounded it with a luminous cloud, and she placed a throne in the middle of the cloud that no one might see it except the holy Spirit who is called the mother of the living. And she called his name Yaltabaath.

"This is the first archon who took a great power from his mother. And he removed himself from her and moved away from the places in which he was born. He became strong and created for himself other aeons with a flame of luminous fire which (still) exists now. And he joined with his arrogance which is in him and begot authorities for himself. The name of the first one is Athoth, whom the generations call [the reaper]. The second one is Harmas, who [is the eye] of envy. The third one is Kalila-Oumbri. The fourth one is Yabel. The fifth one is Adonaiou, who is called Sabaoth. The sixth one is Cain, whom the generations of men call the sun. The seventh is Abel. The eighth is Abrisene. The ninth is Yobel. The tenth is Armoupieel. The
eleventh is Melceir-Adonein. The twelth is Belias, it is he who is over the depth of Hades. And he placed seven kings — each corresponding to the firmaments of heaven — over the seven heavens, and five over the depth of the abyss, that they may reign. And he shared his fire with them, but he did not send forth from the power of the light which he had taken from his mother, for he is ignorant darkness.

“And when the light had mixed with the darkness, it caused the darkness to shine. And when the darkness had mixed with the light, it darkened the light and it became neither light nor dark, but it became dim.

“Now the archon who is weak has three names. The first name is Yaltabaoth, the second is Saklas, and the third is Samael. And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him. For he said, ‘I am God and there is no other God beside me,’ for he is ignorant of his strength, the place from which he had come.

“And the archons created seven powers for themselves, and the powers created for themselves six angels for each one until they became 365 angels. And these are the bodies belonging with the names: the first is Athoth, he has a sheep’s face; the second is Eloaiou, he has a donkey’s face; the third is Astaphaios, he has a [hyena’s] face; the fourth is Yao, he has a [serpent’s] face with seven heads; the fifth is Sabaoth, he has a dragon’s face; the sixth is Adonin, he had a monkey’s face; the seventh is Sabbede, he has a shining fire-face. This is the sevenness of the week.

“But Yaltabaoth had a multitude of faces more than all of them so that he could put a face before all of them, according to his desire, when he is in the midst of seraphs. He shared his fire with them; therefore he became lord over them. Because of the power of the glory he possessed of his mother’s light, he called himself God. And he did not obey the place from which he came. And he united the seven powers in his thought with the authorities which were with him. And when he spoke it happened. And he named each power beginning with the highest: the first is goodness with the first (authority), Athoth; the second is foreknowledge with the second one, Eloaiio; and the third is Astraphaiio (II has been corrected by a later hand to read: and the third is divinity with the third one, Astraphaiio); the fourth is lordship with the fourth one, Yao; the fifth is kingdom with the fifth one, Sabaoth; the sixth is envy with the sixth one, Adonein; the seventh is understanding with the seventh one, Sabbateon. And these have a firmament corresponding to each aeon-heaven. They
were given names according to the glory which belongs to heaven for the [destruction of the] powers. And in the names which were given to [them by] their Originator there was power. But the names which were given them according to the glory which belongs to heaven mean for them destruction and powerlessness. Thus they have two names.

"And (IV 20, 11: having created) everything he organized according to the model of the first aeons which had come into being, so that he might create them like the indestructible ones. Not because he had seen the indestructible ones, but the power in him, which he had taken from his mother, produced in him the likeness of the cosmos. And when he saw the creation which surrounds him and the multitude of the angels around him which had come forth from him, he said to them, 'I am a jealous God and there is no other God beside me.' But by announcing this he indicated to the angels who attended him that there exists another God. For if there were no other one, of whom would he be jealous?

Then the mother began to move to and fro. She became aware of the deficiency when the brightness of her light diminished. And she became dark because her consort had not agreed with her."

And I said, "Lord, what does it mean that she moved to and fro?" But he smiled and said, "Do not think it is, as Moses said, 'above the waters.' No, but when she had seen the wickedness which had happened, and the theft which her son had committed, she repented. And she was overcome by forgetfulness in the darkness of ignorance and she began to be ashamed. (IV 21, 13-15: And she did not dare to return, but she was moving) about. And the moving is the going to and fro.

"And the arrogant one took a power from his mother. For he was ignorant, thinking that there existed no other except his mother alone. And when he saw the multitude of the angels which he had created, then he exalted himself above them.

"And when the mother recognized that the garment of darkness was imperfect, then she knew that her consort had not agreed with her. She repented with much weeping. And the whole pleroma heard the prayer of her repentance and they praised on her behalf the invisible, virginal Spirit. (IV 22, 5-7: And he consented; and when the invisible Spirit had consented), the holy Spirit poured over her from their whole pleroma. For it was not her consort who came to her, but he came to her through the pleroma in order that he might correct her deficiency. And she was taken up not to her own aeon
but above her son, that she might be in the ninth until she has corrected her deficiency.

"And a voice came forth from the exalted aeon-heaven: 'The Man exists and the son of Man.' And the chief archon, Yaltabaoth, heard (it) and thought that the voice had come from his mother. And he did not know from where it came. And he taught them, the holy and perfect Mother-Father, the complete foreknowledge, the image of the invisible one who is the Father of the all (and) through whom everything came into being, the first Man. For he revealed his likeness in a human form.

"And the whole aeon of the chief archon trembled, and the foundations of the abyss shook. And of the waters which are above matter, the underside was illuminated by the appearance of his image which had been revealed. And when all the authorities and the chief archon looked, they saw the whole region of the underside which was illuminated. And through the light they saw the form of the image in the water.

"And he said to the authorities which attend him, 'Come, let us create a man according to the image of God and according to our likeness, that his image may become a light for us.' And they created by means of their respective powers in correspondence with the characteristics which were given. And each authority supplied a characteristic in the form of the image which he had seen in its natural (form). He created a being according to the likeness of the first, perfect Man. And they said, 'Let us call him Adam, that his name may become a power of light for us.'

"And the powers began: the first one, goodness, created a bonesoul; and the second, foreknowledge, created a sinew-soul; the third, divinity, created a flesh-soul; and the fourth, the lordship, created a marrow-soul; the fifth, kingdom created a blood-soul; the sixth, envy, created a skin-soul; the seventh, understanding, created a hair-soul. And the multitude of the angels attended him and they received from the powers the seven substances of the natural (form) in order to create the proportions of the limbs and the proportion of the rump and the proper working together of each of the parts.

"The first one began to create the head. Eteraphaope-Abron created his head; Meniggesstroeth created the brain; Asterechme (created) the right eye; Thaspomocha (created) the left eye; Yeronumos (created) the right ear; Bissoum (created) the left ear; Akioreim (created) the nose; Banen-Ephroum (created) the lips; Amen (created) the
teeth; Ibikan (created) the molars; Basiliademe (created) 1 the tonsils; Achcha (created) the uvula; Adaban (created) 1 the neck; Chaaman (created) the vertebrae; 5 Dearcho (created) the throat; Tebar (created) the (IV 25, 4-5: right shoulder; ) left 1 shoulder; Mniarcon (created) the (IV 25, 6-7: right 1 elbow; ) left elbow; Abirion (created) the right underarm; Evanthen (created) the left underarm; Krys (created) the right hand; Beluai (created) the left hand; Treneu 10 (created) the fingers of the right hand; Balbel 1 (created) the fingers of the left hand; Kriman (created) the nails 1 of the hands; Astrops (created) the right breast; Barroph (created) the left breast; Baoum (created) the right 1 shoulder joint; Ararim (created) the left shoulder joint; Areche (created) 15 the belly; Phthave (created) the navel; Senaphim (created) 1 the abdomen; Arachethopi (created) the right 1 ribs; Zabedo (created) the left ribs; Barias (created) the (IV 25, 19-20: right 1 hip; Phnouth the) left hip; Abenlenarchei (created) 1 the marrow; Chnoumeninorin (created) the bones; Gesole (created) the stomach; Agromauna (created) 1 the heart; Bano (created) the lungs; Sostrapal (created) 1 the liver; Anesimalar (created) the spleen; Thopithro 1 (created) the intestines; Biblo (created) the kidneys; Roeror (created) the sinews; Taphreo (created) the spine 25 of the body; Ipouspoboba (created) the veins; Bineborin (created) the arteries; Atoimenpsephei, 1 theirs are the breaths which are in all the limbs; Entholleia (created) all the flesh; Bedouk (created) 1 the right buttock (?); Arabeei (created) the left penis; Eilo (created) the testicles; Sorma (created) the genitals; Gorma-Kaiochlabar 1 (created) the right thigh; Nebrih (created) 1 the left thigh; Pserem (created) the kidneys of 1 the right leg; Asaklas (created) the left 1 kidney; Ormaoth (created) the right leg; Emenun (created) the left leg; Knyx (created) the 17 right shin-bone; Tupelon (created) the left shin-bone; Achiel (created) the right knee; Phnene (created) the 1 left knee; Phiouthem (created) the right foot; Boabel (created) its toes; Trachoun (created) 5 the left foot; Phikna (created) its toes; Miamai (created) the nails of the feet; Labernioun — —.

"And those who were appointed over all of these 1 are: Zathoth, Armas, Kalila, Jabel, (IV 26, 19-20: Sabaoth, Cain, Abel). And 1 those who are particularly active in the limbs 10 (are) the head Diolimodraza, the neck Yammeax, 1 the right shoulder Yakouib, the 1 left shoulder Verton, the right hand 1 Oudidi, the left one Arbao, the fingers of the right hand 1 Lampno, the fingers of the left hand 15 Leekaphar, the right breast Barbar, the 1 left breast Imae, the chest Pisandriaptes, 1 the
right shoulder joint Koade, the left shoulder joint Odeor, the right ribs Asphixix, the left ribs Synogchouta, the belly ArouphSabalo, the right thigh Charcharb, the left thigh Chthaon, all the genitals Bathinoth, the right leg Choux, the left leg Charcha, the right shin-bone Aroer, the left shin-bone Toechtha, the right knee AoI, the left knee Charaner, the right foot Bastan, its toes Archentechtha, the left foot Marephnounth, its toes Abrana.

"Seven have power over all of these: Michael, Ouriel, Asmenedas, Saphasatoel, Aarmouriam, Richram, Amiorps. And the ones who are in charge over the senses (are) Archendekta; and he who is in charge over the receptions (is) Deitharbathas; and he who is in charge over the imagination (is) Oummaa; and he who is over the composition Aachiaram, and he who is over the whole impulse Riaramnacho.

"And the origin of the demons which are in the whole body is determined to be four: heat, cold, wetness, and dryness. And the mother of all of them is matter. And he who reigns over the heat (is) Phloxopha; and he who reigns over the cold is Oroorrothos; and he who reigns over what is dry (is) Erimacho; and he who reigns over the wetness (is) Athuro. And the mother of all of these, Onorthochrasaei, stands in their midst since she is illimitable, and she mixes with all of them. And she is truly matter, for they are nourished by her.

"The four chief demons are: Ephememphi who belongs to pleasure, Yoko who belongs to desire, Nenentophni who belongs to grief, Blaomen who belongs to fear. And the mother of them all is Aesthesis-Ouch-Epi-Ptoe. And from the four demons passions came forth. And from grief (came) envy, jealousy, distress, trouble, pain, callousness, anxiety, mourning, etc. And from pleasure much wickedness arises, and empty pride, and similar things. And from desire (comes) anger, wrath, and bitterness, and bitter passion, and unsatedness, and similar things. And from fear (comes) dread, fawning, agony, and shame. All of these are like useful things as well as evil things. But the insight into their true (character) is Anaro, who is the head of the material soul, for it belongs with the seven senses, Ouch-Epi-Ptoe.

"This is the number of the angels: together they are 365. They all worked on it until, limb for limb, the natural and the material body was completed by them. Now there are other ones in charge over the remaining passions whom I did not mention to you. But if you wish to know them, it is written in the book of Zoroaster. And all the angels and demons worked until they had constructed the natural body.
And their product was completely inactive and motionless for a long time.  

"And when the mother wanted to retrieve the power which she had given to the chief archon, she petitioned the Mother-Father of the All who is most merciful. He sent, by means of the holy decree, the five lights down upon the place of the angels of the chief archon. They advised him that they should bring forth the power of the mother. And they said to Yaltabaoth, 'Blow into his face something of your spirit and his body will arise.' And he blew into his face the spirit which is the power of his mother; he did not know (this), for he exists in ignorance. And the power of the mother went out of Yaltabaoth into the natural body which they had fashioned after the image of the one who exists from the beginning. The body moved and gained strength, and it was luminous.

"And in that moment the rest of the powers became jealous, because he had come into being through all of them and they had given their power to the man, and his intelligence was greater than that of those who had made him, and greater than that of the chief archon. And when they recognized that he was luminous, and that he could think better than they, and that he was free from wickedness, they took him and threw him into the lowest region of all matter.

"But the blessed One, the Mother-Father, the beneficent and merciful One, had mercy on the power of the mother which had been brought forth out of the chief archon, for they (the archons) might gain power over the natural and perceptible body. And he sent, through his beneficent Spirit and his great mercy, a helper to Adam, luminous Epinoia which comes out of him, who is called Life. And she assists the whole creature, by toiling with him and by restoring him to his fullness and by teaching him about the descent of his seed (and) by teaching him about the way of ascent, (which is) the way he came down. And the luminous Epinoia was hidden in Adam, in order that the archons might not know her, but that the Epinoia might be a correction of the deficiency of the mother.

"And the man came forth because of the shadow of the light which is in him. And his thinking was superior to all those who had made him. When they looked up they saw that his thinking was superior. And they took counsel with the whole array of archons and angels. They took fire and earth and water and mixed them together with the four fiery winds. And they wrought them together and caused a great disturbance. And they brought him (Adam) into
the shadow of death in order that they might form (him) again from earth and water and fire and the spirit which originates in matter, which is the ignorance of darkness and desire, and their counterfeit spirit. This is the tomb of the newly-formed body with which the robbers had clothed the man, the bond of forgetfulness; and he became a mortal man. This is the first one who came down and the first separation. But the Epinoia of the light which was in him, she is the one who was to awaken his thinking.

"And the archons took him and placed him in paradise. And they said to him, 'Eat, that is at leisure,' for their luxury is bitter and their beauty is depraved. And their luxury is deception and their trees are godlessness and their fruit is deadly poison and their promise is death. And the tree of their life they had placed in the midst of paradise.

"And I shall teach you what is the mystery of their life, which is the plan which they made together, which is the likeness of their spirit. The root of this (tree) is bitter and its branches are death, its shadow is hate and deception is in its leaves, and its blossom is the ointment of evil, and its fruit is death and desire is its seed, and it sprouts in darkness. The dwelling place of those who taste from it is Hades and the darkness is their place of rest.

"But what they call the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is the Epinoia of the light, they stayed in front of it in order that he (Adam) might not look up to his fullness and recognize the nakedness of his shamefulness. But it was I who brought about that they ate."

And I said to the savior, "Lord, was it not the serpent that taught Adam to eat?" The savior smiled and said, "The serpent taught them to eat from wickedness of begetting, lust, (and) destruction, that he (Adam) might be useful to him. And he (Adam) knew that he was disobedient to him (the chief archon) due to light of the Epinoia which is in him, which made him more correct in his thinking than the chief archon. And (the latter) wanted to bring about the power which he himself had given him. And he brought a forgetfulness over Adam.

And I said to the savior, "What is the forgetfulness?" And he said, "It is not the way Moses wrote (and) you heard. For he said in his first book, 'He put him to sleep' (Gn 2: 21), but (it was) in his perception. For also he said through the prophet, 'I will make their hearts heavy that they may not pay attention and may not see' (Is 6: 10).

"Then the Epinoia of the light hid herself in him (Adam). And the
chief archon wanted 30 to bring her out of his rib. 1 But the Epinoia of the light cannot be grasped. 1 Although darkness pursued her, it did not catch her. And 1 he brought a part of his power 1 out of him. And he made another creature 35 in the form of a woman according to the likeness of the Epinoia 1 which had appeared to him. And he brought 23 the part which he had taken from the power 1 of the man into the female creature, 1 and not as Moses said, 1 ‘his rib-bone.’

“And he (Adam) saw the woman beside 5 him. And in that moment 1 the luminous Epinoia appeared, and she lifted 1 the veil which lay over his mind. 1 And he became sober from the drunkenness of darkness. 1 And he recognized his counter-image, and he said, 10 ‘This is indeed bone of my bones 1 and flesh of my flesh.’ Therefore 1 the man will leave his father and his 1 mother and he will cleave to his wife and they will 1 both be one flesh. For they 15 will send him his consort, 1 and he will leave his father and his mother. { . . . . } 20

“And our sister 1 Sophia (is) she who came down in innocence 1 in order to rectify her deficiency. 1 Therefore she was called Life, which is 1 the mother of the living, by the foreknowledge 25 of the sovereignty of heaven (IV 36, 18-20: and [ ] to him [ ].) And through her 1 they have tasted the perfect Knowledge. I appeared 1 in the form of an eagle on 1 the tree of knowledge, which is the Epinoia 1 from the foreknowledge of the pure light, 30 that I might teach them and awaken 1 them out of the depth of sleep. For they 1 were both in a fallen state and they 1 recognized their nakedness. The Epinoia 1 appeared to them as a light (and) she awakened 35 their thinking.

“And when Yaldabaoth 1 noticed that they withdrew from him, 1 he cursed his earth. He found the woman as she was 24 preparing herself for her husband. He was lord 1 over her though he did not know the mystery 1 which had come to pass through the holy decree. 1 And they were afraid to blame him. And 5 he showed his angels his 1 ignorance which is in him. And 1 he cast them out of paradise and 1 he clothed them in gloomy darkness. And the 1 chief archon saw the virgin who stood 10 by Adam, and that the luminous 1 Epinoia of life had appeared in her. 1 And Yaldabaoth was full of ignorance. 1 And when the foreknowledge of the All 1 noticed (it), she sent some and they snatched 15 life out of Eve.

“And the chief archon 1 seduced her and he begot in her 1 two sons; the first and the second 1 (are) Eloim and Yave. Eloim has a bear-face 1 and Yave has a cat-face. The one 20 is righteous but the other is unrighteous. (IV 38, 4-6: Yave 1 is righteous but Eloim is 1 unrighteous.)
Yave he set 1 over the fire and the wind, and Eloim he set 1 over the water and 1 the earth. And these he called with the names 25 Cain and Abel with a view to deceive. 1

"Now up to the present day 1 sexual intercourse continued due to the chief archon. 1 And he planted sexual desire 1 in her who belongs to Adam. And he produced through 30 intercourse the copies of the bodies, 1 and he inspired them with his counterfeit spirit. 1

"And the two archons he set 1 over principalities so that 1 they might rule over the tomb. 35 And when Adam recognized the likeness of his own 1 foreknowledge, he begot the likeness 25 of the son of man. He called him Seth 1 according to the way of the race in the aeons. Likewise 1 the mother also sent down her spirit 1 which is in her likeness and a 5 copy of those who are in the pleroma, for she will 1 prepare a dwelling place for the aeons which will come 1 down. And he made them drink water of forgetfulness, 1 from the chief archon, in order that they might not 1 know from where they came. Thus 10 the seed remained for 1 a while assisting (him) in order that, when 1 the Spirit comes forth from 1 the holy aeons, he may raise up and 1 heal him from the deficiency, that the 15 whole pleroma may (again) become holy and 1 faultless."

And I said to the savior, 1 "Lord, will all the souls then be brought safely 1 into the pure light?" He answered 1 and said to me, "Great things 20 have arisen in your mind, for it is 1 difficult to explain them to others 1 except to those who are from 1 the immovable race. Those on whom the Spirit of life 1 will descend and (with whom) he will be with the power, 25 they will be saved and become perfect 1 and be worthy of the greatness and 1 be purified in that place from 1 all wickedness and the involvements in evil. 1 Then they have no other care than 30 the incorruption alone, to which they direct their attention 1 from here on, without anger or envy or jealousy 1 or desire and greed of 1 anything. They are not affected by 1 anything except the state of being in 35 the flesh alone, which they bear while looking expectantly 1 for the time when they will be met 26 by the receivers (of the body). Such 1 then are worthy of the imperishable, 1 eternal life and the calling. For they endure 1 everything and bear up under 5 everything, that they may finish 1 the good fight and inherit 1 eternal life."

I said to him, "Lord, 1 the souls of those who did not do these works, 1 (but) on whom the power and Spirit 10 descended, (IV 40, 24-25: will they be rejected?" He 1 answered and said to me, "If the 1 Spirit (IV 40, 24-25: descended upon them), they will in any case be saved 1 and they will change (for the better). For the 1 power will descend on every
man, for without it no one can stand. And after they are born, then, when the Spirit of life increases and the power comes and strengthens that soul, no one can lead it astray with works of evil. But those on whom the counterfeit spirit descends are drawn by him and they go astray."

And I said, "Lord, where will the souls of these go when they have come out of their flesh?" And he smiled and said to me, "The soul, in which the power will become stronger than the counterfeit spirit, is strong and it flees from evil and, through the intervention of the incorruptible one, it is saved and it is taken up to the rest of the aeons."

And I said, "Lord, those, however, who have not known to whom they belong, where will their souls be?" And he said to me, "In those the despicable spirit has gained strength when they went astray. And he burdens the soul and draws it to the works of evil, and he casts it down into forgetfulness. And after it comes out of (the body), it is handed over to the authorities, who came into being through the archon, and they bind it with chains and cast it into prison and consort with it until it is liberated from the forgetfulness and acquires knowledge. And if thus it becomes perfect, it is saved."

And I said, "Lord, how can the soul become smaller and return into the nature of its mother or into man?" Then he rejoiced when I asked him this, and he said to me, "Truly, you are blessed! That soul is made to follow another one, since the Spirit of life is in it. It is saved through him. It is not again cast into another flesh."

And I said, "Lord, these also who did not know but have turned away, where will their souls go?" Then he said to me, "To that place where the angels of poverty go they will be taken, the place where there is no repentance. And they will be kept for the day on which those who have blasphemed the spirit will be tortured, and they will be punished with eternal punishment."

And I said, "Lord, from where did the counterfeit spirit come?" Then he said to me, "The Mother-Father who is rich in mercy, the holy Spirit in every way, the One who is merciful and who sympathizes with you (pl.), i.e. the Epinoia of the foreknowledge of light, he raised up the offspring of the perfect race and its thinking and the eternal light of man. When the chief archon realized that they were exalted above him in the height — and they surpass him in thinking
– then he wanted to seize their thought, not knowing that they surpassed him in thinking and that he will not be able to seize them.

"He made a plan with his authorities, which are his powers, and they committed together adultery with Sophia, and bitter fate was begotten through them, which is the last of the changeable bonds. And it is of a sort that is interchangeable. And it is harder and stronger than she with whom the gods united and the angels and the demons and all the generations until this day. For from that fate came forth every sin and injustice and blasphemy and the chain of forgetfulness and ignorance and every severe command and serious sins and great fears. And thus the whole creation was made blind, in order that they may not know God who is above all of them. And because of the chain of forgetfulness their sins were hidden. For they are bound with measures and times and moments, since it (fate) is lord over everything.

"And he (the chief archon) repented for everything which had come into being through him. This time he planned to bring a flood upon the work of man. But the greatness of the light of the foreknowledge informed Noah, and he proclaimed (it) to all the offspring which are the sons of men. But those who were strangers to him did not listen to him. It is not as Moses said, 'They hid themselves in an ark' (Gn 7:7), but they hid themselves in a place, not only Noah but also many other people from the immovable race. They went into a place and hid themselves in a luminous cloud. And he (Noah) recognized his authority, and she who belongs to the light was with him, having shone on them because he (the chief archon) had brought darkness upon the whole earth.

"And he made a plan with his powers. He sent his angels to the daughters of men, that they might take some of them for themselves and raise offspring for their enjoyment. And at first they did not succeed. When they had no success, they gathered together again and they made a plan together. They created a counterfeit spirit, who resembles the Spirit who had descended, so as to pollute the souls through it. And the angels changed themselves in their likeness into the likeness of their (the daughters of men) mates, filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they had mixed for them, and with evil. They brought gold and silver and a gift and copper and iron and metal and all kinds of things. And they steered the people who had followed them into great troubles, by leading them astray with many deceptions. They (the people) became old without having enjoy-
They died, not having found truth and without knowing the God of truth. And thus the whole creation became enslaved forever, from the foundation of the world until now. And they took women and begot children out of the darkness according to the likeness of their spirit. And they closed their hearts, and they hardened themselves through the hardness of the counterfeit spirit until now.

"I, therefore, the perfect Pronoia of the all, changed myself into my seed, for I existed first, going on every road. For I am the richness of the light; I am the remembrance of the pleroma.

"And I went into the realm of darkness and I endured till I entered the middle of the prison. And the foundations of chaos shook. And I hid myself from them because of their wickedness, and they did not recognize me.

"Again I returned for the second time and I went about. I came forth from those who belong to the light, which is I the remembrance of the Pronoia. I entered into the midst of darkness and the inside of Hades, since I was seeking (to accomplish) my task. And the foundations of chaos shook, that they might fall down upon those who are in chaos and might destroy them. And again I ran up to my root of light lest they be destroyed before the time.

"Still for a third time I went — I am the light which exists in the light, I am the remembrance of the Pronoia — that I might enter into the midst of darkness and the inside of Hades. And I filled my face with the light of the completion of their aeon. And I entered into the midst of their prison which is the prison of the body. And I said, 'He who hears, let him get up from the deep sleep.' And he wept and shed tears. Bitter tears he wiped from himself and he said, 'Who is it that calls my name, and from where has this hope come to me, while I am in the chains of the prison?' And I said, 'I am the Pronoia of the pure light; I am the thinking of the virginal Spirit, who raised you up to the honored place. Arise and remember that it is you who hearkened, and follow your root, which is I, the merciful one, and guard yourself against the angels of poverty and the demons of chaos and all those who ensnare you, and beware of the deep sleep and the enclosure of the inside of Hades.'

"And I raised him up and sealed him in the light of the water with five seals, in order that death might not have power over him from this time on.

"And behold, now I shall go up to the perfect aeon. I have completed everything for you in your hearing. And I have said everything
to you that you might write 30 them down and give them secretly to your fellow spirits, 1 for this is the mystery of the immovable race." 1

And the savior presented these things to him that 1 he might write them down and keep them 1 secure. And he said to him, "Cursed be 35 everyone who will exchange these things for a gift 1 or for food or for 1 drink or for clothing or for any other such thing." 32 And these things were presented to him 1 in a mystery, and immediately 1 he disappeared from him. 1 And he went to his fellow disciples and related 5 to them what the savior had told him. 1

Jesus Christ, Amen. 1

The 1 Apocryphon 1 According to John
THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS (II,2)

Introduced by

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_The Gospel of Thomas_ is a collection of traditional sayings of Jesus. These sayings, or small groups of sayings (the numeration of the 114 sayings is not found in the manuscript, but is followed by most scholars today) are introduced in most instances by "Jesus said (to them)," sometimes by a question or a statement of the disciples. Only in one instance (13) is a saying expanded into a longer discourse between Jesus and the disciples. The sayings preserved in _The Gospel of Thomas_ are of several types: wisdom sayings (proverbs), parables, eschatological sayings (prophecies), and rules for the community. They appear in this document in arrangement that does not reveal any overall plan of composition. On occasion, small groups of sayings are kept together by similarity in form or by catchword association.

The Coptic _Gospel of Thomas_ was translated from the Greek. Fragments of this gospel in the original Greek version are extant in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1, 654 and 655, which had been discovered and published at the beginning of this century, but were identified as parts of _The Gospel of Thomas_ only after the discovery of the Coptic Nag Hammadi library. The first of these Greek papyri contains sayings 26-30, 77, 31-33 (in this order!), the other two the sayings 1-7 and 36-40, respectively. At least one of these Greek fragments comes from a manuscript that was written before 200 C.E.; thus the Greek version of this gospel was used in Egypt as early as the second century.

The authorship of this gospel is attributed to Didymos Judas Thomas, that is, Judas "the twin" (both the Aramaic _thomas_ and the Greek _didymos_ mean "twin"). In the Syrian church, (Judas) Thomas was known as the brother of Jesus who founded the churches of the East, particularly of Edessa (in a somewhat later tradition, he even travels to India). Other Christian writings of the eastern churches have been attributed to the same apostle; to these belong the _Acts of Thomas_ and most likely also _The Book of Thomas_, which was discovered as part of the Nag Hammadi library (II,7). The latter writing, as well as _The Gospel of Thomas_, were most likely written in Syria. It is doubtful, however, whether it was originally composed in Aramaic and then translated into Greek, although many of the sayings, like the oldest sayings of the canonical gospels, were certainly first circulated in Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

A large number of the sayings of _The Gospel of Thomas_ have parallels in the gospels of the New Testament, in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), as well as the Gospel of John (parallels with the latter are especially strik-
ing; cf., e.g., sayings 13, 19, 24, 38, 49, 92). Some of the sayings are known to occur also in noncanonical gospels, especially in the Gospel According to the Hebrews (cf. saying 2) and the Gospel of the Egyptians (cf. saying 22), which are both attested for the second century by Clement of Alexandria (floruit 180-200). However, a direct dependence of The Gospel of Thomas upon another noncanonical gospel is very unlikely. More problematic is the relationship of The Gospel of Thomas to the canonical gospels. Whereas the latter all contain large segments of narrative materials, no traces of such materials are found in the former. Already this makes it unlikely that our document can be considered as an eclectic excerpt from the gospels of the New Testament. If one considers the form and wording of the individual sayings in comparison with the form in which they are preserved in the New Testament, The Gospel of Thomas almost always appears to have preserved a more original form of the traditional saying (in a few instances, where this is not the case, the Coptic translation seems to have been influenced by the translator’s knowledge of the New Testament gospels), or presents versions which are independently based on more original forms. More original and shorter forms are especially evident in the parables of Thomas (cf. sayings 8, 9, 57, 63, 64, 65, 96, cf. 109).

In its literary genre, The Gospel of Thomas is more akin to one of the sources of the canonical gospels, namely the so-called Synoptic Sayings Source (often called “Q” from the German word Quelle, “source”), which was used by both Matthew and Luke. Indeed, many of the sayings found in our document were also parts of this source of the gospels of the New Testament. On the other hand, The Gospel of Thomas also contains quite different older sayings, paralleled in the Gospel of John, in Mark 4:21-25, and even in 1 Corinthians (cf. saying 17 with 1 Co 2:9). Moreover, the sayings about the future coming of the Son of Man, so characteristic for “Q” (cf. Lk 12:8, 10; 17:22, 24, 26), are completely missing. The Gospel of Thomas is, therefore, a closely related but independent collection of sayings. In its most original form, it may well date from the first century (the middle of the first century is usually considered the best date for the composition of “Q”).

Neither the Coptic translation nor the Greek fragments seem to have preserved this gospel in its oldest form. Even the comparison of the extant Coptic and Greek texts demonstrates that the text was subject to change in the process of transmission. The oldest form most likely contained wisdom sayings and eschatological sayings of Jesus, including a number of parables. The sayings of this type, even those which have no parallels in the gospels of the New Testament (especially the parables 97 and 98), may belong to the oldest strata of the tradition. Whereas “Q” emphasized the eschatological expectation of the future coming of the “Kingdom of God,” The Gospel of Thomas in its oldest form, stressed the finding of wisdom, or of the “Kingdom of the Father,” in the knowledge (gnosis) of oneself (cf. saying 3), guided by the sayings of Jesus. This understanding of salvation is similar to that expressed in many passages of the Gospel of John in which the finding of truth and life is bound to the words of Jesus (Jn 6:63; 8:51). The first saying of The Gospel of Thomas states this programatically: the interpretation of the sayings is identical with the finding of eternal life.

In the further history and growth of The Gospel of Thomas, this wisdom interpretation of the sayings of Jesus is more clearly developed under the influence
of gnostic theology, though it is not possible to ascribe the work to any particular gnostic school or sect. The theme of recognizing oneself is further elaborated in sayings (cf. 50, 51) which speak of the knowledge of one's divine origin which even Adam did not share, although “he came into being from a great power” (saying 85). Salvation is obtained in stripping off everything that is of this world (cf. sayings 21a, 37, 56). The disciples must “pass by” the present corruptible existence (saying 42). The existence of the ideal gnostic disciple is characterized by the term “solitary one,” which describes the one who has left behind everything that binds human beings to the world (cf. sayings 16, 23, 30, and 76). Even women can obtain this goal, if they achieve the “maleness” of the solitary existence (saying 114).

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS

II 32, 10-51, 28

These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.

(1) And he said, “Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death.”

(2) Jesus said, “Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the all.”

(3) Jesus said, “If those who lead you say to you, ‘See, the kingdom is in the sky,’ then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, ‘It is in the sea,’ then the fish will precede you. Rather, the kingdom is inside of you, and it is outside of you. When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known, and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living father. But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty and it is you who are that poverty.”

(4) Jesus said, “The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are first will become last, and they will become one and the same.”

(5) Jesus said, “Recognize what is in your (sg.) sight, and that which is hidden from you (sg.) will become plain to you (sg.). For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest.”

(6) His disciples questioned him and said to him, “Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray? Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?”
Jesus said, "Do not tell lies," and do not do what you hate, for all things are plain in the sight of heaven. For nothing hidden will not become manifest, and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered."

(7) Jesus said, "Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man."

(8) And he said, "The man is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of small fish. Among them the wise fisherman found a fine large fish. He threw all the small fish back into the sea and chose the large fish without difficulty. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

(9) Jesus said, "Now the sower went out, took a handful (of seeds), and scattered them. Some fell on the road; the birds came and gathered them up. Others fell on rock, did not take root in the soil, and did not produce ears. And others fell on thorns; they choked the seed(s) and worms ate them. And others fell on the good soil and it produced good fruit: it bore sixty per measure and a hundred and twenty per measure."

(10) Jesus said, "I have cast fire upon the world, and see, I am guarding it until it blazes."

(11) Jesus said, "This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. In the days when you consumed what is dead, you made it what is alive. When you come to dwell in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?"

(12) The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will depart from us. Who is to be our leader?"

Jesus said to them, "Wherever you are, you are to go to James the righteous, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."

(13) Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like."

Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel."

Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."

Thomas said to him, "Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like."

Jesus said, "I am not your (sg.) master. Because you (sg.) have drunk, you (sg.) have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out."
And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, ‘What did Jesus say to you?’

Thomas said to them, ‘If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.’

(14) Jesus said to them, ‘If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and if you pray, you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits. When you go into any land and walk about in the districts, if they receive you, eat what they will set before you, and heal the sick among them. For what goes into your mouth will not defile you, but that which issues from your mouth – it is that which will defile you.’

(15) Jesus said, ‘When you see one who was not born of woman, prostrate yourselves on your faces and worship him. That one is your father.’

(16) Jesus said, ‘Men think, perhaps, that it is peace which I have come to cast upon the world. They do not know that it is dissension which I have come to cast upon the earth: fire, sword, and war. For there will be five in a house: three will be against two, and two against three, the father against the son, and the son against the father. And they will stand solitary.’

(17) Jesus said, ‘I shall give you what no eye has seen and what no ear has heard and what no hand has touched and what has never occurred to the human mind.’

(18) The disciples said to Jesus, ‘Tell us how our end will be.’

Jesus said, ‘Have you discovered, then, the beginning, that you look for the end? For where the beginning is, there will the end be. Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning; he will know the end and will not experience death.’

(19) Jesus said, ‘Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being. If you become my disciples and listen to my words, these stones will minister to you. For there are five trees for you in Paradise which remain undisturbed summer and winter and whose leaves do not fall. Whoever becomes acquainted with them will not experience death.’

(20) The disciples said to Jesus, ‘Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like.’

He said to them, ‘It is like a mustard seed. It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it falls on tilled soil, it produces a great plant and becomes a shelter for birds of the sky.’
(21) Mary said to Jesus, "Whom are your disciples like?"

He said, "They are like children who have settled in a field which is not theirs. When the owners of the field come, they will say, 'Let us have back our field.' They (will) undress in their presence in order to let them have back their field and to give it back to them. Therefore I say, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You, then, be on your guard against the world. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, for the difficulty which you expect will (surely) materialize. Let there be among you a man of understanding. When the grain ripened, he came quickly with his sickle in his hand and reaped it. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

(22) Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom."

They said to him, "Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?"

Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter [the kingdom]."

(23) Jesus said, "I shall choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand, and they shall stand as a single one."

(24) His disciples said to him, "Show us the place where you are, since it is necessary for us to seek it."

He said to them, "Whoever has ears, let him hear. There is light within a man of light, and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness."

(25) Jesus said, "Love your brother like your soul, guard him like the pupil of your eye."

(26) Jesus said, "You see the mote in your brother's eye, but you do not see the beam in your own eye. When you cast the beam out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to cast the mote from your brother's eye."

(27) (Jesus said,) "If you do not fast as regards the world, you will not find the kingdom. If you do not observe the Sabbath as a Sabbath, you will not see the father."
(28) Jesus said, ‘‘I took my place in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in flesh. I found all of them intoxicated; I found none of them thirsty. And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men, because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight; for empty they came into the world, and empty too they seek to leave the world. But for the moment they are intoxicated. When they shake off their wine, then they will repent.’’

(29) Jesus said, ‘‘If the flesh came into being because of spirit, it is a wonder. But if spirit came into being because of the body, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty.’’

(30) Jesus said, ‘‘Where there are three gods, they are gods. Where there are two or one, I am with him.’’

(31) Jesus said, ‘‘No prophet is accepted in his own village; no physician heals those who know him.’’

(32) Jesus said, ‘‘A city being built on a high mountain and fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden.’’

(33) Jesus said, ‘‘Preach from your (pi.) housetops that which you (sg.) will hear in your (sg.) ear. For no one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a hidden place, but rather he sets it on a lampstand so that everyone who enters and leaves will see its light.’’

(34) Jesus said, ‘‘If a blind man leads a blind man, they will both fall into a pit.’’

(35) Jesus said, ‘‘It is not possible for anyone to enter the house of a strong man and take it by force unless he binds his hands; then he will (be able to) ransack his house.’’

(36) Jesus said, ‘‘Do not be concerned from morning until evening and from evening until morning about what you will wear.’’

(37) His disciples said, ‘‘When shall we see you?’’

Jesus said, ‘‘When you disrobe without being ashamed and take up your garments and place them under your feet like little children and tread on them, then [will you see] the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid.’’

(38) Jesus said, ‘‘Many times have you desired to hear these words which I am saying to you, and you have no one else to hear them from. There will be days when you will look for me and will not find me.’’

(39) Jesus said, ‘‘The pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys
of knowledge (gnosis) and hidden them. They themselves have not entered, nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to. You, however, be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves."

(40) Jesus said, "A grapevine has been planted outside of the father, but being unsound, it will be pulled up by its roots and destroyed."

(41) Jesus said, "Whoever has something in his hand will receive more, and whoever has nothing will be deprived of even the little he has."

(42) Jesus said, "Become passers-by." 20

(43) His disciples said to him, "Who are you, that you should say these things to us?"

(Jesus said to them,) "You do not realize who I am from what I say to you, but you have become like the Jews, for they (either) love the tree and hate its fruit (or) love the fruit and hate the tree."

(44) Jesus said, "Whoever blasphemes against the father will be forgiven, and whoever blasphemes against the son will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemesthe story of the holy spirit will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven."

(45) Jesus said, "Grapes are not harvested from thorns, nor are figs gathered from thistles, for they do not produce fruit. A good man brings forth good from his storehouse; an evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse, which is in his heart, and says evil things. For out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things."

(46) Jesus said, "Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered (before him). Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will become superior to John."

(47) Jesus said, "It is impossible for a man to mount two horses or to stretch two bows. And it is impossible for a servant to serve two masters; otherwise, he will honor the one and treat the other contemptuously. No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine. And new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst; nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it spoil it. An old patch is not sewn into a new garment, because a tear would result."

(48) Jesus said, "If two make peace with each other in this one house, they will say to the mountain, 'Move away,' and it will move away."
(49) Jesus said, "Blessed are the solitary and elect, for you will find the kingdom. For you are from it, and to it you will return."

(50) Jesus said, "If they say to you, 'Where did you come from?', say to them, 'We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established itself and became manifest through their image.' If they say to you, 'Is it you?', say, 'We are its children, and we are the elect of the living father.' If they ask you, 'What is the sign of your father in you?', say to them, 'It is movement and repose.'"

(51) His disciples said to him, "When will the repose of the dead come about, and when will the new world come?"
He said to them, "What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it."

(52) His disciples said to him, "Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel, and all of them spoke in you."
He said to them, "You have omitted the one living in your presence and have spoken (only) of the dead."

(53) His disciples said to him, "Is circumcision beneficial or not?"
He said to them, "If it were beneficial, their father would beget them already circumcised from their mother. Rather, the true circumcision in spirit has become completely profitable."

(54) Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

(55) Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his father and his mother cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters and take up his cross in my way will not be worthy of me."

(56) Jesus said, "Whoever has come to understand the world has found (only) a corpse, and whoever has found a corpse is superior to the world."

(57) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a man who had [good] seed. His enemy came by night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The man did not allow them to pull up the weeds; he said to them, 'I am afraid that you will go intending to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.' For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be plainly visible, and they will be pulled up and burned."

(58) Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who has suffered and found life."

(59) Jesus said, "Take heed of the living one while you are alive, lest you die and seek to see him and be unable to do so."
(60) (They saw) a Samaritan carrying a lamb on his way to Judea. He said to his disciples, "That man is round about the lamb." They said to him, "So that he may kill it and eat it."
He said to them, "While it is alive, he will not eat it, but only when he has killed it and it has become a corpse."
They said to him, "He cannot do so otherwise."
He said to them, "You too, look for a place for yourselves within repose, lest you become a corpse and be eaten."
(61) Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed: the one will die, and the other will live."
Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?"
Jesus said to her, "I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father."
(62) Jesus said, "It is to those [who are worthy of my] mysteries that I tell my mysteries. Do not let your (sg.) left hand know what your (sg.) right hand is doing."
(63) Jesus said, "There was a rich man who had much money. He said, 'I shall put my money to use so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouse with produce, with the result that I shall lack nothing.' Such were his intentions, but that same night he died. Let him who has ears hear."
(64) Jesus said, "A man had received visitors. And when he had prepared the dinner, he sent his servant to invite the guests. He went to the first one and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said, 'I have claims against some merchants. They are coming to me this evening. I must go and give them my orders. I ask to be excused from the dinner.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master has invited you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a house and am required for the day. I shall not have any spare time.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'My friend is going to get married, and I am to prepare the banquet. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused from the dinner.' He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a farm, and I am on my way to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused.' The servant returned and said to his master, 'Those whom you invited to the dinner..."
The master said to his servant, ‘Go outside to the streets and bring back those whom you happen to meet, so that they may dine.’ Businessmen and merchants [will] not enter the places of my father.’

(65) He said, ‘There was a good man who owned a vineyard. He leased it to tenant farmers so that they might work it and he might collect the produce from them. He sent his servant so that the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard. They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master. The master said, ‘Perhaps he did not recognize them.’ He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well. Then the owner sent his son and said, ‘Perhaps they will show respect to my son.’ Because the tenants knew that it was he who was the heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him. Let him who has ears hear.’

(66) Jesus said, ‘Show me the stone which the builders have rejected. That one is the cornerstone.’

(67) Jesus said, ‘If one who knows the all still feels a personal deficiency, he is completely deficient.’

(68) Jesus said, ‘Blessed are you when you are hated and persecuted. Wherever you have been persecuted they will find no place.’

(69) Jesus said, ‘Blessed are they who have been persecuted within themselves. It is they who have truly come to know the father. Blessed are the hungry, for the belly of him who desires will be filled.’

(70) Jesus said, ‘That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves. That which you do not have within you [will] kill you if you do not have it within you.’

(71) Jesus said, ‘I shall [destroy this] house, and no one will be able to build it […]’

(72) [A man said] to him, ‘Tell my brothers to divide my father’s possessions with me.’

He said to him, ‘O man, who has made me a divider?’

He turned to his disciples and said to them, ‘I am not a divider, am I?’

(73) Jesus said, ‘The harvest is great but the laborers are few. Behave the lord, therefore, to send out laborers to the harvest.’

(74) He said, ‘O lord, there are many around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in the cistern.’

(75) Jesus said, ‘Many are standing at the door, but it is the solitary who will enter the bridal chamber.’
(76) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a merchant who had a consignment of merchandise and who discovered a pearl. That merchant was shrewd. He sold the merchandise and bought the pearl alone for himself. You too, seek his unfailing and enduring treasure where no moth comes near to devour and no worm destroys." 

(77) Jesus said, "It is I who am the light which is above them all. It is I who am the all. From me did the all come forth, and unto me did the all extend. Split a piece of wood, and I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."

(78) Jesus said, "Why have you come out into the desert? To see a reed shaken by the wind? And to see a man clothed in fine garments [like your] kings and your great men? Upon them are the fine garments, and they are unable to discern the truth."

(79) A woman from the crowd said to him, "Blessed are the womb which bore you and the breasts which nourished you."

He said to [her], "Blessed are those who have heard the word of the father and have truly kept it. For there will be days when you (pl.) will say, 'Blessed are the womb which has not conceived and the breasts which have not given milk.'"

(80) Jesus said, "He who has recognized the world has found the body, but he who has found the body is superior to the world."

(81) Jesus said, "Let him who has grown rich be king, and let him who possesses power renounce it."

(82) Jesus said, "He who is near me is near the fire, and he who is far from me is far from the kingdom."

(83) Jesus said, "The images are manifest to man, but the light in them remains concealed in the image of the light of the father. He will become manifest, but his image will remain concealed by his light."

(84) Jesus said, "When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see your images which came into being before you, and which neither die nor become manifest, how much you will have to bear!"

(85) Jesus said, "Adam came into being from a great power and a great wealth, but he did not become worthy of you. For had he been worthy, [he would] not [have experienced] death."

(86) Jesus said, "[The foxes have their holes] and the birds have their nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head and rest."

(87) Jesus said, "Wretched is the body that is dependent upon a body, and wretched is the soul that is dependent on these two."
(88) Jesus said, "The angels and the prophets will come to you and give to you those things you (already) have. And you too, give them those things which you have, and say to yourselves, 'When will they come and take what is theirs?'"

(89) Jesus said, "Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Do you not realize that he who made the inside is the same one who made the outside?"

(90) Jesus said, "Come unto me, for my yoke is easy and my lordship is mild, and you will find repose for yourselves."

(91) They said to him, "Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you."

He said to them, "You read the face of the sky and of the earth, but you have not recognized the one who is before you, and you do not know how to read this moment."

(92) Jesus said, "Seek and you will find. Yet, what you asked me about in former times and which I did not tell you then, now I do desire to tell, but you do not inquire after it."

(93) Jesus said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs, lest they throw them on the dung heap. Do not throw the pearls to swine, lest they...it.

(94) Jesus said, "He who seeks will find, and he who knocks will be let in."

(95) Jesus said, "If you have money, do not lend it at interest, but give it to one from whom you will not get it back."

(96) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a certain woman. She took a little leaven, concealed it in some dough, and made it into large loaves. Let him who has ears hear."

(97) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a certain woman who was carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on the road, still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke and the meal emptied out behind her on the road. She did not realize it; she had noticed no accident. When she reached her house, she set the jar down and found it empty."

(98) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a certain man who wanted to kill a powerful man. In his own house he drew his sword and stuck it into the wall in order to find out whether his hand could carry through. Then he slew the powerful man."

(99) The disciples said to him, "Your brothers and your mother are standing outside."

He said to them, "Those here who do the will of my father are..."
my brothers and my mother. It is they who will enter the kingdom of my father.”

(100) They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “Caesar’s men demand taxes from us.”

He said to them, “Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God, and give me what is mine.”

(101) Jesus said, “Whoever does not hate his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not love his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. For my mother [...], but my true mother gave me life.”

(102) Jesus said, “Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog sleeping in the manger of oxen, for neither does he eat nor does he let the oxen eat.”

(103) Jesus said, “Fortunate is the man who knows where the brigands will enter, so that he may get up, muster his domain, and arm himself before they invade.”

(104) They said to Jesus, “Come, let us pray today and let us fast.” Jesus said, “What sin that I have committed, or wherein have I been defeated? But when the bridegroom leaves the bridal chamber, then let them fast and pray.”

(105) Jesus said, “He who knows the father and the mother will be called the son of a harlot.”

(106) Jesus said, “When you make the two one, you will become the sons of man, and when you say, ‘Mountain, move away,’ it will move away.”

(107) Jesus said, “The kingdom is like a shepherd who had a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, went astray. He left the ninety-nine and looked for that one until he found it. When he had gone to such trouble, he said to the sheep, ‘I care for you more than the ninety-nine.’”

(108) Jesus said, “He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.”

(109) Jesus said, “The kingdom is like a man who had a [hidden] treasure in his field without knowing it. And after he died, he left it to his son. The son did not know (about the treasure). He inherited the field and sold it. And the one who bought it went plowing and [found] the treasure. He began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished.”
(110) Jesus said, "Whoever finds the world and becomes rich, let him renounce the world."!

(111) Jesus said, "The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence. And the one who lives from the living one will not see death." Does not Jesus say, "Whoever finds himself is superior to the world"?

(112) Jesus said, "Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul; woe to the soul that depends on the flesh."!

(113) His disciples said to him, "When will the kingdom come?" (Jesus said,) "It will not come by waiting for it. It will not be a matter of saying 'here it is' or 'there it is'. Rather, the kingdom of the father is spread out upon the earth, and men do not see it."

(114) Simon Peter said to them, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life."

Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."

The Gospel According to Thomas
THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP (II,3)

Introduced and translated by

WESLEY W. ISENBERG

The Gospel of Philip is a compilation of statements pertaining primarily to the meaning and value of sacraments within the context of a Valentinian conception of the human predicament and life after death.

Like the gospels of the New Testament canon these statements employ a variety of literary types: aphorism, analogy, parable, paraenesis, polemic, narrative dialogue, dominical sayings, biblical exegesis, and dogmatic propositions. However, The Gospel of Philip is not a gospel like one of the New Testament gospels. To be sure, it does provide the occasional word or deed of Jesus. It contains seventeen sayings of Jesus, nine of which are citations and interpretations of Jesus' words already found in the canonical gospels (55,33-34; 57,3-5; 68,8-12; 68,26-27; 72,33-73,1; 77,18; 83,11-13; 84,7-9; 85,29-31). The new sayings (55,37-56,3; 58,10-14; 59,25-27; 63,29-30; 64,2-9; 64,10-12; 67,30-35; and 74,25-27), identified by the formula introducing them (“he said,” “the Lord said,” or “the Savior said”) are brief and enigmatic and are best interpreted from a gnostic perspective. There are also a few stories about Jesus; they are similar to those in the early Christian apocryphal gospels. During a revelation on a mountain he appeared larger than life to his disciples (57,28-58,10). His three female companions were each named Mary (59,6-11), though he had an apparent preference for Mary Magdalene (63,32-36). After he had put seventy-two colors into a single vat in the dye-works of Levi, they coalesced into white (63,25-30). Philip the apostle is said to be the source of the story that Joseph the carpenter made the cross on which his offspring later hung (73,8-15).

These few sayings and stories about Jesus, however, are not set in any kind of narrative framework like one of the New Testament gospels. In fact, The Gospel of Philip is not organized in a way that can be conveniently outlined. Although some continuity is achieved through an association of ideas (cf. 51,29-52,35), a series of contrasts) or by catchwords (cf. 77,15-78,24, the word love), the line of thought is rambling and disjointed. Complete changes of subject are common.

The text gives the impression of logical coherence because of the recurrence of certain themes (e.g., the meaning of the names of Jesus, 56,3-15; 62,7-17; 63,21-24; the need to experience resurrection before one dies, 56,15-20; 56,26-57,22; 66,16-23; 73,1-8; putting on light to escape the hostile powers, 70,5-9; 76,22-77,1; 86,4-10), but this coherence is probably more coincidental than planned.

It is possible that the compiler of this collection purposely disjoined what were once whole paragraphs of thought and distributed the pieces in various places in this work. A clear thought results if one joins 70,5-9 with 76,22-77,1 and 66,7-29, in that order. Indefinite pronouns gain proper antecedents in the process. Similarly 75,13-14 seems to provide the theme amplified by 61,36-62,5. In 63,5-11 one has the analogy prefacing the point made in 70,22-29.
Since *The Gospel of Philip* is eccentrically arranged, its contents can best be considered by reference to summarizing statements. The statement at 69,1-4 reflects a dominant concern, the mysteries of the bridal chamber, and distinguishes those who may participate — the free men and virgins — from those who may not — the animals, slaves, and defiled women.

Those excluded from the bridal chamber are described entirely in negative terms. We learn, *inter alia*, that animals and men must remain separate (78,25-28; 75,25-26). But “there are many animals in the world which are in human form” (81,7-8). If one is an “animal” he belongs “outside or below” rather than “above” or “within” (79,5-11). “Slaves” are to be contrasted with “sons” (52,2-6), with “children” (81,12-14) and with the “free” (79,13-18). A “slave” is one who commits sin (77,18), who is ignorant of the inner wickedness which enslaves him (83,18-29; 85,24). “Defiled women” are all women who participate in sexual intercourse, i.e., in “the marriage of defilement,” which is fleshly and lustful (81,34-82,10). Unclean spirits seek to defile men and woman sexually (65,1-23).

“Free men and virgins” are the opposite of “animals, slaves, and defiled women.” A virgin has never been defiled by sexual intercourse (55,27-28; cf. 81,34-82,8). The “free man” does not sin (77,15-18). He neither fears the flesh nor loves it (66,4-6). He is endangered by the deceptions of the archons who seek to enslave him (54,16-31). “Free men and virgins” are those called “Christians” (74,13-16), who possess “the resurrection, the light, the cross, the holy spirit” (74,18-21).

According to this gospel the existential malady of humanity results from the differentiation of the sexes. When Eve was separated from Adam, the original androgynous unity was broken (68,22-26). The purpose of Christ’s coming is to reunite Adam and Eve (70,12-17). Just as a husband and wife unite in the bridal chamber, so also the reunion effected by Christ takes place in a bridal chamber, the sacramental one (70,17-22), where a person receives a foretaste and assurance of ultimate union with an angelic, heavenly counterpart (cf. 58,10-14).

This leads us to another summarizing statement (67,27-30), “The lord did everything in a mystery, a baptism and a chrism and a eucharist and a redemption and a bridal chamber.” The sentence probably describes five stages of a complete initiation, rather than five separate, unrelated sacraments. It is possible that “bridal chamber” is a covering term for the whole initiation, since a particular benefit of one stage of the initiation (e.g., “light,” associated usually with chrism, 67,5-6; 69,12-14; 57,27-28) is also connected with bridal chamber (86,4-11; cf. 70,5-9). In 74,12-24 the person anointed in chrism is said to possess everything — resurrection, light, the cross, the holy spirit — but then the author adds, “the father gave him this in the bridal chamber.” Conversely, what one expects to be connected with bridal chamber appears in reference to eucharist (58,10-14) or baptism and chrism (69,4-14).

*The Gospel of Philip* does not describe, step by step, the ritual of all or any of the five stages of initiation. It does explain, however, that in baptism one “goes down into the water and comes up” with the gift of the name “Christian,” so that one can say, “I am a Christian” (64,22-31; cf. 77,9-12). The analogy of God as a dyer suggests that baptism was by immersion (61,12-20). The initiate takes off his clothes before entering the water so that he may put on the perfect
man as a new garment (75,21-25). That the chrism was a warm perfumed oil is apparent from references to the chrism as fire (67,5-9; 57,27-28) and to the oil as being fragrant (77,36-78,7; 82,15-23). Perhaps a trinitarian formula was used at the moment of anointing (67,19-24). The priest consecrates the bread and the cup for the eucharist (77,2-8). The consecrated cup contains wine mixed with water (75,14-21). The consecrated bread is “bread from heaven,” food fit for the initiate (55,10-14). To partake of the bread and the cup is to receive “the flesh and the blood” of Jesus (56,26-57,22; cf. 63,21-24). A further ritual called ransom, or redemption, is mentioned, but no details are given. This stage of the initiation is compared to “the holy of the holy” in the Jerusalem temple and is said to take place in the bridal chamber (69,23-27).

Because of the contents, the eccentric arrangement, and the literary types exhibited, it is likely that The Gospel of Philip is a collection of excerpts mainly from a Christian Gnostic sacramental catechesis. It explains the significance of sacramental rites of initiation, the meaning of sacred names, especially names of Jesus, and provides paraenesis for the life of the initiated. It interprets Biblical passages, particularly from the book of Genesis, makes use of typology, both historical and sacramental, and, as catechists do, argues on the basis of analogy and parable. In these and other ways The Gospel of Philip resembles the orthodox catechisms from the second through fourth centuries.

The title of this text may be derived merely from the fact that Philip is the only apostle named in it (73,8), though Philip, along with Thomas and Matthew, had an eminence among Gnostics as a privileged recipient and custodian of dominical revelation. The Coptic text is undoubtedly a translation of a Greek text which was written perhaps as late as the second half of the third century C.E. Because of the interest in the meaning of certain Syriac words (63,21-23; 56,7-9), its affinities to Eastern sacramental practice and catecheses, and its ascetic ethics, an origin in Syria is probable.

THE GOSPEL OF PHILIP

II 51, 29-86, 19

A Hebrew makes another Hebrew, and such a person is called “proselyte.” But a proselyte does not make another proselyte. just as they and make others like themselves, 52 while [others] simply exist. 5

The slave seeks only to be free, but he does not hope to acquire the estate of his master. But the son is not only a son but lays claim to the inheritance of the father. Those who are heirs to the dead are themselves dead, and they inherit the dead. Those who are heirs to what is living are alive, and they are heirs to both what is living and the dead. The dead are heirs to nothing. For how can he who is dead inherit? If he who is dead inherits what is living he will not die, but he who is dead will live even more.
A gentile 1 does not die, for he has never lived in order that he may die. He who has believed in the truth has found life, and this one is in danger of dying, for he is alive. 1 Since Christ came the world has been created, the cities adorned, 1 the dead carried out. When we were Hebrews we were orphans and 1 had only our mother, but when we became Christians we had both father and mother. 25

Those who sow in winter reap in summer. 1 The winter is the world, the summer the other eternal realm (aeon). 1 Let us sow in the world that we may reap in the summer. Because of this it is fitting for us not to pray in the winter. Summer 30 follows winter. But if any man reap in winter he will not actually reap but only pluck out, since it will not provide a harvest for such a person. It is not only [...] that it will [...] come forth, but also on the Sabbath 35 [...] is barren.

Christ came 53 to ransom some, 1 to save others, to redeem others. He ransomed those who were strangers and 1 made them his own. And he set his own apart, those whom he gave as a pledge according to his plan. It was not only when he appeared that he voluntarily laid down his life, 1 but he voluntarily laid down his life from the very day the world came into being. 10 Then he came first in order to take it, since it had been given as a pledge. It fell into the hands of robbers and was taken captive, but he saved it. He redeemed the good people in the world as well as the evil.

Light and darkness, 15 life and death, right and left, 1 are brothers of one another. They are inseparable. 1 Because of this neither are the good good, nor the evil evil, 1 nor is life life, nor death death. 20 For this reason each one will dissolve into its earliest origin. But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble, eternal.

Names given to the worldly are very deceptive, 25 for they divert our thoughts from what is correct to what is incorrect. 1 Thus one who hears the word “God” does not perceive what is correct, but perceives what is incorrect. So also with “the father” 30 and “the son” and “the holy spirit” and “life” and “light” and “resurrection” and “the church” and all the rest — people do not perceive what is correct but they perceive what is incorrect, [unless] they have come to know what is correct. The [names which are heard] are in the world [... 54 deceive. If they were in the eternal realm (aeon), they would at no time be used as names in the world. 1 Nor were they set among worldly things. They have an end in the eternal realm.

One single name is not uttered in the world, the name which the father gave to the son; it is the name above all things: the name of the
father. For the son would not become father unless he wore the name of the father. Those who have this name know it, but they do not speak it. But those who do not have it do not know it.

But truth brought names into existence in the world for our sakes because it is not possible to learn it without these names. Truth is one single thing; it is many things and for our sakes to teach about this one thing in love through many things. The rulers (archons) wanted to deceive man, since they saw that he had a kinship with those that are truly good. They took the name of those that are good and gave it to those that are not good, so that through the names they might deceive him and bind them to those that are not good. And afterward, what a favor they do for them! They make them be removed from those that are not good and place them among those that are good. These things they knew, for they wanted to take the free man and make him a slave to them forever.

There are powers which man, not wishing him to be saved, in order that they may. For if man is saved, there will not be any sacrifices and animals will not be offered to the powers. Indeed the animals were the ones to whom they sacrificed. They were indeed offering them up alive, but when they offered them up they died. As for man, they offered him up to God dead, and he lived.

Before Christ came there was no bread in the world, just as Paradise, the place where Adam was, had many trees to nourish the animals but no wheat to sustain man. Man used to feed like the animals, but when Christ came, the perfect man, he brought bread from heaven in order that man might be nourished with the food of man. The rulers thought that it was by their own power and will that they were doing what they did, but the holy spirit in secret was accomplishing everything through them as it wished. Truth, which existed since the beginning, is sown everywhere. And many see it being sown, but few are they who see it being reaped.

Some said, "Mary conceived by the holy spirit." They are in error. They do not know what they are saying. When did a woman ever conceive by a woman? Mary is the virgin whom no power defiled. She is a great anathema to the Hebrews, who are the apostles and apostolic men. This virgin whom no power defiled and the powers defile themselves. And the lord would not have said "My father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17) unless he had had another father, but he would have said simply "[My father]."

The lord said to the disciples, "[...] bring into
the house of the father. But do not take (anything) in the house of the father nor carry it off."

"Jesus" is a hidden name, "Christ" is a revealed name. For this reason "Jesus" is not particular to any language; rather he is always called by the name "Jesus." While as for "Christ," in Syriac it is "Messiah," in Greek it is "Christ." Certainly all the others have it according to their own language. "The Nazarene" is he who reveals what is hidden. Christ has everything in himself, whether man or angel or mystery, and the father.

Those who say that the lord died first and (then) rose up are in error, for he rose up first and (then) died. If one does not first attain the resurrection he will not die. As God lives, he would . . .

No one will hide a large valuable object in something large, but many a time one has tossed countless thousands into a thing worth a penny. Compare the soul. It is a precious thing and it came to be in a contemptible body.

Some are afraid lest they rise naked. Because of this they wish to rise in the flesh, and [they] do not know that it is those who wear the [flesh] who are naked. [It is] those who [ . . . ] to uncoat themselves who are not naked. "Flesh [and blood shall] not inherit the kingdom of God]" (1 Co 15:50). What is this which will not inherit? This which is on us. But what is this, too, which will inherit? It is that which belongs to Jesus and his blood. Because of this he said, "He who shall not eat my flesh and drink my blood has not life in him" (Jn 6:53). What is it? His flesh is the word, and his blood is the holy spirit. He who has received these has food and he has drink and clothing. I find fault with the others who say that it will not rise. Then both of them are at fault. You (sg.) say that the flesh will not rise. But tell me what will rise, that we may honor you (sg.). You (sg.) say the spirit in the flesh, and it is also this light in the flesh. (But) this too is a matter which is in the flesh, for whatever you (sg.) shall, say, you (sg.) say nothing outside the flesh. It is necessary to rise in this flesh, since everything exists in it. In this world those who put on garments are better than the garments. In the kingdom of heaven the garments are better than those who have put them on.

It is through water and fire that the whole place is purified — the visible by visible, the hidden by the hidden. There are some things hidden through those visible. There is water in water, there is fire in chrism.

Jesus took them all by stealth, for he did not appear as he was,
but in the manner in which [they would] be able to see him. He appeared to [them all.] He appeared to the great as great. He [appeared] to the small as small. He [appeared] to the angels as an angel, and to men as a man. Because of this his word hid itself from everyone. Some indeed saw him, thinking that they were seeing themselves, but when he appeared to his disciples in glory on the mount he was not small. He became great, but he made the disciples great, that they might be able to see him in his greatness.

He said on that day in the thanksgiving, "You who have joined the perfect light with the holy spirit, unite the angels with us also, as being the images." Do not despise the lamb, for without it it is not possible to see the king. No one will be able to go in to the king if he is naked.

The heavenly man has many more sons than the earthly man. If the sons of Adam are many, although they die, how much more the sons of the perfect man, they who do not die but are always begotten. The father makes a son, and the son has not the power to make a son. For he who has been begotten has not the power to beget, but the son gets brothers for himself, not sons. All who are begotten in the world are begotten in a natural way, and the others are nourished from [the place] whence they have been born. It is from being promised to the heavenly place that man receives nourishment. And had the word gone out from that place it would be nourished from the mouth and it would become perfect. For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and give birth. For this reason we also kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another.

There were three who always walked with the lord: Mary his mother and her sister and Magdalene, the one who was called his companion. His sister and his mother and his companion were each a Mary.

"The father" and "the son" are single names, "the holy spirit" is a double name. For they are everywhere: they are above, they are below; they are in the concealed, they are in the revealed. The holy spirit is in the revealed: it is below. It is in the concealed: it is above.

The saints are served by evil powers, for they are blinded by the holy spirit into thinking that they are serving an (ordinary) man whenever they do so for the saints. Because of this a disciple asked the lord one day for something of this world. He said to him, "Ask your mother, and she will give you of the things which are another's."

The apostles said to the disciples, "May our entire offering obtain
They called [Sophia] “salt.” Without it no offering is acceptable. But Sophia is barren, without child. For this reason she is called “a trace of salt.” Wherever they will in their own way, the holy spirit [ , 60 and] her children are many.

What the father possesses belongs to the son, and the son himself, so long as he is small, is not entrusted with what is his. But when he becomes a man his father gives him all that he possesses.

Those who have gone astray, whom the spirit (itself) begets, usually go astray also because of the spirit. Thus, by one and the same breath, the fire blazes and is put out. 10

Echamoth is one thing and Echmoth another. Echamoth is Wisdom simply, but Echmoth is the Wisdom of death which is the one which knows death, which is called “the little Wisdom.”

There are domestic animals, like the bull and the ass and others of this kind. Others are wild and live apart in the deserts. Man ploughs the field by means of the domestic animals, and from this he is nourished (both) he and the animals, whether tame or wild. Compare the perfect man. It is through powers which are submissive that he ploughs, preparing for everything to come into being. 1 For it is because of this that the whole place stands, whether the good or the evil, the right and the left. The holy spirit shepherds every one and rules the “tame” ones and the “wild” ones, as well as those which are unique. 1 For indeed he shuts them in, in order that [if . . . ]wish, they will not be able to escape.

[He who] has been created is 35 beautiful, but you (sg.) would find his sons noble creations. If he were not created but begotten, you (sg.) would find that his seed was noble. But now he was created, (and) he begot. What nobility is this? First adultery came into being, afterward murder. And he was begotten in adultery, for he was the child of the serpent. So he became a murderer, just like his father, and he killed his brother. Indeed every act of sexual intercourse which has occurred between those unlike one another is adultery.

God is a dyer. As the good dyes, which are called “true,” dissolve with the things dyed in them, so it is with those whom God has dyed. Since his dyes are immortal, they become immortal by means of his colors. 1 Now God dips what he dips in water.

It is not possible for anyone to see anything of the things that actually exist unless he becomes like them. This is not the way with man in the world: he sees the sun without being a sun; and he sees the heaven and the earth and all other things, but he is not these
things. This is quite in keeping with the truth. But you (sg.) saw something of that place, and you became those things. You saw the spirit, you became spirit. You saw Christ, you became Christ. You saw [the father, you] shall become father. So [in this place] you see everything and [do] not [see] yourself, but [in that place] you do see yourself — and what you see you shall [become].

Faith receives, love gives. [No one will be able to receive] without faith. No one will be able to give without love. Because of this, in order that we may indeed receive, we believe, and in order that we may love, we give, since if one gives without love, he has no profit from what he has given. He who has received something other than the lord is still a Hebrew.

The apostles who were before us had these names for him: "Jesus, the Nazorean, Messiah," that is, "Jesus, the Nazorean, the Christ." The last name is "Christ," the first is "Jesus," that in the middle is "the Nazarene." "Messiah" has two meanings, both "the Christ" and "the measured." "Jesus" in Hebrew is "the redemption." "Na­zara" is "the truth." "The Nazarene," then, is "the truth." "Christ" . . . been measured. It is "the Nazarene" and "Jesus" who have been measured.

When the pearl is cast down into the mud it becomes greatly despised, nor if it is anointed with balsam oil will it become more precious. But it always has value in the eyes of its owner. Compare the sons of God, wherever they may be. They still have value in the eyes of their father.

If you (sg.) say, "I am a Jew," no one will be moved. If you say, "I am a Roman," no one will be disturbed. If you say, "I am a Greek, a barbarian, a slave, a free man," no one will be troubled. [If] you [say], "I am a Christian," the . . . will tremble. Would that I might . . . like that — the person whose name will not be able to endure [hearing].

God is a man-eater. For this reason men are [sacrificed] to him. Before men were sacrificed animals were being sacrificed, since those to whom they were sacrificed were not gods.

Glass decanters and earthenware jugs are both made by means of fire. But if glass decanters break they are done over, for they came into being through a breath. If earthenware jugs break, however, they are destroyed, for they came into being without breath.

An ass which turns a millstone did a hundred miles walking. When it was loosed it found that it was still at the same place. There are
men who make many journeys, but make no progress towards any destination. When evening came upon them, they saw neither city nor village, neither human artifact nor natural phenomenon, power nor angel. In vain have the wretches labored.

The eucharist is Jesus. For he is called in Syriac "Pharisatha," which is "the one who is spread out," for Jesus came to crucify the world.

The lord went into the dye works of Levi. He took seventy-two different colors and threw them into the vat. He took them out all white. And he said, "Even so has the son of man come [as] a dyer."

As for the Wisdom who is called "the barren," she is the mother of the angels. And the companion of the [...] Mary Magdalene. [... loved] her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [...]. The rest of [the disciples 64 ...]. They said to him, "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The savior answered and said to them, "Why do I not love you like her? When a blind man and one who sees are both together in darkness, they are no different from one another. When the light comes, then he who sees will see the light, and he who is blind will remain in darkness."

The Lord said, "Blessed is he who is before he came into being. For he who is, has been and shall be."

The superiority of man is not obvious to the eye, but lies in what is hidden from view. Consequently he has mastery over the animals which are stronger than he is and great in terms of the obvious and the hidden. This enables them to survive. But if man is separated from them, they slay one another and bite one another. They ate one another because they did not find any food. But now they have found food because man tilled the soil.

If one go down into the water and come up without having received anything and says, "I am a Christian," he has borrowed the name at interest. But if he receive the holy spirit, he has the name as a gift. He who has received a gift does not have to give it back, but of him who has borrowed it at interest, payment is demanded. This is the way it happens to one when he experiences a mystery.

Great is the mystery of marriage! For [without] it the world would not exist. Now the existence of [the world ...], and the existence of marriage. Think of the [... relationship], for it possesses [... power. Its image consists of a [defilement].

The forms of evil spirit include male ones and female ones. The males are they that unite with the souls which inhabit a female form,
but the females are they which are mingled with those in a male form, though one who was disobedient. And none shall be able to escape them, since they detain him if he does not receive a male power or a female power, the bridegroom and the bride. — One receives them from the mirrored bridal chamber. — When the wanton women see a male sitting alone, they leap down on him and play with him and defile him. So also the lecherous men, when they see a beautiful woman sitting alone, they persuade her and compel her, wishing to defile her. But if they see the man and his wife sitting beside one another, the female cannot come in to the man, nor can the male come in to the woman. So if the image and the angel are united with one another, neither can any venture to go in to the man or the woman.

He who comes out of the world and so can no longer be detained on the grounds that he was in the world evidently is above the desire of the fear. He is master over . . . He is superior to envy. If comes, they seize him and throttle [him]. And how will [this one] be able to escape the [great . . .] powers? How will he be able to . . .

There are some [who say], "We are faithful," in order that the unclean spirits and the demons. For if they had the holy spirit, no unclean spirit would cleave to them. Fear not the flesh nor love it. If you (sg.) fear it, it will gain mastery over you. If you love it, it will swallow and paralyze you.

And so he dwells either in this world or in the resurrection or in the middle place. God forbid that I be found there! In this world there is good and evil. Its good things are not good, and its evil things are not evil. But there is evil after this world which is truly evil — what is called "the middle." It is death. While we are in this world it is fitting for us to acquire the resurrection, so that when we strip off the flesh we may be found in rest and not walk in the middle. For many go astray on the way. For it is good to come forth from the world before one has sinned.

There are some who neither will nor have the power to; and others who, if they will, do not profit: for they did not act since, (they believe,) makes them sinners. And if they do not will, justice will elude them in both cases: and [it is] always a matter of the will, not the act.

An apostolic man in a vision saw some people shut up in a house of fire and bound with fiery . . ., lying flaming . . . them in faith . . . And they said to them, "[. . .] able to be saved?" . . . "They did not desire it. They received [. . .] punishment, what is called 'the darkness,' because he [. . .]"
It is from water and fire that the soul and the spirit came into being. It is from water and fire and light that the son of the bridal chamber (came into being). The fire is the chrism, the light is the fire. I am not referring to that fire which has no form, but to the other fire whose form is white, which is bright and beautiful, and which gives beauty.

Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images. The world will not receive truth in any other way. There is a rebirth and an image of rebirth. It is certainly necessary to be born again through the image. Which one? Resurrection. The image must rise again through the image. The bridal chamber and the image must enter through the image into the truth: this is the restoration. Not only must those who produce the name of the father and the son and the holy spirit do so, but those who have produced them for you. If one does not acquire them, the name ("Christian") will also be taken from him. But one receives the unction of the power of the cross. This power the apostles called "the right and the left." For this person is no longer a Christian but a Christ.

The lord did everything in a mystery, a baptism and a chrism and a eucharist and a redemption and a bridal chamber.

[...] he said, "I came to make [the things below] like the things [above, and the things] outside like those [inside. I came to unite] them in the place." [...] here through [types ...]. Those who say, "[There is a heavenly man and] there is one above [him]," are wrong.

For it is the first of these two heavenly men, the one who is revealed, that they call "the one who is below"; and he to whom the hidden belongs is (supposed to be) that one who is above him. For it would be better for them to say, "The inner and the outer, and what is outside the outer." Because of this the lord called destruction "the outer darkness": there is not another outside of it. He said, "My father who is in secret." He said, "Go into your (sg.) chamber and shut the door behind you, and pray to your father who is in secret" (Mt 6:6), the one who is within them all. But that which is within all is the fullness. Beyond it there is nothing else within it. This is that of which they say, "That which is above them."

Before Christ some came from a place they were no longer able to enter, and they went where they were no longer able to come out. Then Christ came. Those who went in he brought out, and those who went out he brought in.

When Eve was still in Adam death did not exist. When she was separated from him death came into being. If he enters again and attains his former self, death will be no more.
"My God, my God, why, O lord, have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34 and parallels). It was on the cross that he said these words, for he had departed from that place.

[...] who has been begotten through him who [...] from God. The [...] from the dead. [...] to be, but now [...] perfect. [...] flesh, but this [...] is true flesh. [...] is not true, but [...] only an image of the true. 69

A bridal chamber is not for the animals, nor is it for the slaves, nor for defiled women; but it is for free men and virgins.

Through the holy spirit we are indeed begotten again, but we are begotten through Christ in the two. We are anointed through the spirit. When we were begotten we were united. None can see himself either in water or in a mirror without light. Nor again can you (sg.) see in light without water or mirror. For this reason it is fitting to baptize in the two, in the light and the water. Now the light is the chrism.

There were three buildings specifically for sacrifice in Jerusalem. The one facing west was called "the holy." Another facing south was called "the holy of the holy." The third facing east was called "the holy of the holies," the place where only the high priest enters. Baptism is "the holy" building. Redemption is "the holy of the holy." "The holy of the holies" is the bridal chamber. Baptism includes the resurrection [and the] redemption; the redemption (takes place) in the bridal chamber. But the bridal chamber is in that which is superior to [...] you (sg.) will not find [...] are those who pray [...] Jerusalem. [...] Jerusalem who [...] Jerusalem, [...] those called "the holy of the holies" [... the] veil was rent [...]. The bridal chamber except the image [...] 70 above. Because of this its veil was rent from top to bottom. For it was fitting for some from below to go upward.

The powers do not see those who are clothed in the perfect light, and consequently are not able to detain them. One will clothe himself in this light sacramentally in the union.

If the woman had not separated from the man, she should not die with the man. His separation became the beginning of death. Because of this Christ came to repair the separation which was from the beginning and again unite the two, and to give life to those who died as a result of the separation and unite them. But the woman is united to her husband in the bridal chamber. Indeed those who have united in the bridal chamber will no longer be separated. Thus Eve
separated from Adam because it was not in the bridal chamber that she united with him.

The soul of Adam came into being by means of a breath. The partner of his soul is the spirit. His mother is the thing that was given to him. His soul was taken from him and replaced by a spirit. When he was united (to the spirit), he spoke words incomprehensible to the powers. They envied him spiritual partner for themselves alone for the bridal chamber so that Jesus appeared Jordan — the fullness of the kingdom of heaven. He who was begotten before everything was begotten anew. He who was once anointed was anointed anew. He who was redeemed in turn redeemed (others).

Indeed, one must utter a mystery. The father of everything united with the virgin who came down, and a fire shone for him on that day. He appeared in the great bridal chamber. Therefore, his body came into being on that very day. It left the bridal chamber as one who came into being from the bridegroom and the bride. So Jesus established everything in it through these. It is fitting for each of the disciples to enter into his rest.

Adam came into being from two virgins, from the spirit and from the virgin earth. Christ, therefore, was born from a virgin to rectify the fall which occurred in the beginning.

There are two trees growing in Paradise. The one bears animals, the other bears men. Adam ate from the tree which bore animals. (He) became an animal and he brought forth animals. For this reason the children of Adam worship animals. The tree fruit is increased. ate the fruit of the man. God created man. men create God. That is the way it is in the world — men make gods and worship their creation. It would be fitting for the gods to worship men!

Surely what a man accomplishes depends on his abilities. For this reason we refer to one's accomplishments as "abilities." Among his accomplishments are his children. They originate in a moment of ease. Thus his abilities determine what he may accomplish, but this ease is clearly evident in the children. You will find that this applies directly to the image. Here is the man made after the image accomplishing things with his physical strength, but producing his children with ease.

In this world the slaves serve the free. In the kingdom of heaven
the free will minister to the slaves: the children of the bridal chamber will minister to the children of the marriage. The children of the bridal chamber have [just one] name: rest. [Altogether] they need take no (other) form [because they have] contemplation. [They are numerous] in the things the glories.

Those go down into the water. [out (of the water),] will consecrate it, they who have in his name. For he said, "[Thus] we should fulfill at righteousness" (Mt 3:15).

Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing. So also when speaking about baptism they say, "Baptism is a great thing," because if people receive it they will live.

Philip the apostle said, "Joseph the carpenter planted a garden because he needed wood for his trade. It was he who made the cross from the trees which he planted. His own offspring hung on that which he planted. His offspring was Jesus and the planting was the cross." But the tree of life is in the middle of the garden. However, it is from the olive tree that we get the chrism, and from the chrism, the resurrection.

This world is a corpse-eater. All the things eaten in it themselves die also. Truth is a life-eater. Therefore no one nourished by [truth] will die. It was from that place that Jesus came and brought food. To those who so desired he gave life, that they might not die.

God a garden. Man a garden. There are and of God. The things which are in I wish. This garden [is the place where] they will say to me, "Eat this or do not eat [that, just as you (sg.) wish." In the place where I will eat all things is the tree of knowledge. That one killed Adam, but here the tree of knowledge made men alive. The law was the tree. It has power to give the knowledge of good and evil. It neither removed him from evil, nor did it set him in the good, but it created death for those who ate of it. For when he said, "Eat this, do not eat that," it became the beginning of death.

The chrism is superior to baptism, for it is from the word "chrism" that we have been called "Christians," certainly not because of the word "baptism." And it is because of the chrism that "the Christ" has his name. For the father anointed the son, and the son anointed the apostles, and the apostles anointed us. He who has been anointed possesses everything. He possesses the resurrection, the light, the cross, the holy spirit. The father gave him this in the bridal chamber;
he merely accepted (the gift). The father was \( \text{in} \) the son and the son in
the father. \( \text{This is [the] kingdom of heaven.} \)

The lord said it well: "Some have entered the kingdom \( \text{of} \) heaven
laughing, and they have come out \( \text{[...]} \) because \( \text{[...]} \) a Christian, \( \text{[...]} \)
And as soon as \( \text{[... went down into]} \) the water he came \( \text{[...]} \)
everything (of this world), \( \text{[...]} \) because \( \text{[...]} \) a trifle, but \( \text{[... full of]} \) contempt for this \( \text{[...]} \) the kingdom of \( \text{[... heaven ...]} \). If he
despises \( \text{[...]} \) and scorcs it as a trifle, \( \text{[...]} \) out laughing. So it is
also \( \text{75 with the bread and the cup and the oil,} \) even though there is
another one superior to these.

The \( \text{world came about through a mistake.} \) For he who created it
wanted to create \( \text{it imperishable and immortal.} \) He fell short of attaining
his desire. \( \text{For the world never was imperishable,} \) nor, for
that matter, was \( \text{he who made the world.} \) For things are not imperishable,
but sons are. Nothing \( \text{will be able to receive imperishability}
if it does not \( \text{first become a son. But he who has not the ability} \)
to receive, how much more will he be unable to give?

The cup \( \text{of prayer contains wine and} \) water, since it is appointed
as the type of \( \text{the blood for which thanks is given. And} \) it is full of
the holy spirit, and \( \text{it belongs to the wholly perfect man. When} \)
we drink this, we shall receive for ourselves the perfect \( \text{man. The living}
water is a body.} \) It is necessary that we put on the living man. \( \text{Therefore, when he is about to go down into the water,} \)
he unclothes himself, in order that he may put on the living man. \( \text{25}
A horse sires a horse, a \( \text{man begets man, a god} \) brings forth a god.
Compare \( \text{[the] bridegroom and the [bride]. They have come from the}
[...]. \) \( \text{30 No Jew [...]} \) \( \text{[...] \text{has existed. And [...]} \text{from the Jews.}
[...]} \) \( \text{Christians, [...]} \) \( \text{35 these [...]} \) are referred to as \( \text{[... "the chosen}
people of [..."] 76 and "the true man" and "the son of} \text{man" and
"the seed of the son of man."} \) \( \text{This true race is renowned} \) in
the world. [... that [... the sons of the bridal chamber dwell.} \)

Whereas in this world the union \( \text{is one of husband with wife — a}
\text{case of strength complemented by} \text{weakness (?) — in the eternal realm}
\text{(aeon) the form of the union} \text{is different, although we refer to them by}
the same names. There are \( \text{other names, however; they are superior to}
every name} \text{that is named and are} \text{stronger than the strong. For}
where there is a show of strength, \( \text{there those who excel in strength ap­}
pear.} \) \( \text{These are not separate things,} \) but both of them are this one \( \text{single thing. This is the one which will not be able to rise above the}
heart of flesh.} \)
Is it not necessary for all those who possess everything to know themselves? Some indeed, if they do not know themselves, will not enjoy what they possess. But those who have come to know themselves will enjoy their possessions.

Not only will they be unable to detain the perfect man, but they will not be able to see him, for if they see him they will detain him. There is no other way for a person to acquire this quality except by putting on the perfect light and he too becoming perfect light. He who has put it on will enter. This is the perfect that we become before we leave. Whoever receives everything be able that place, but will the middle as imperfect. Only Jesus knows the end of this person.

The priest is completely holy, down to his very body. For if he has taken the bread, he will consecrate it. Or the cup or anything else that he gets, he will consecrate. Then how will he not consecrate the body also?

By perfecting the water of baptism, Jesus emptied it of death. Thus we do go down into the water, but we do not go down into death in order that we may not be poured out into the spirit of the world. When that spirit blows, it brings the winter. When the holy spirit breathes, the summer comes.

He who has knowledge of the truth is a free man, but the free man does not sin, for “he who sins is the slave of sin” (Jn 8:34). Truth is the mother, knowledge the father. Those who think that sinning does not apply to them are called “free” by the world. “Knowledge” of the truth merely “makes such people arrogant,” which is what the words “it makes them free” mean. It even gives them a sense of superiority over the whole world. But “love builds up” (1 Co 8:1). In fact, he who is really free through knowledge is a slave because of love for those who have not yet been able to attain to the freedom of knowledge. Knowledge makes them capable of becoming free. Love [never calls] something its own, it possess. It never says “This is yours” or “This is mine,” [but “All these are yours.”] Spiritual love is wine and fragrance. All those who anoint themselves with it take pleasure in it. While those who are anointed are present, those nearby also profit (from the fragrance). If those anointed with ointment withdraw from them and leave, then those not anointed, who merely stand nearby, still remain in their bad odor. The Samaritan gave nothing but wine and oil to the wounded man. It is nothing other than the ointment. It healed the wounds, for “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 P 4:8).
The children a woman bears resemble the man who loves her. If her husband loves her, then they resemble her husband. If it is an adulterer, then they resemble the adulterer. Frequently, if a woman sleeps with her husband out of necessity, while her heart is with the adulterer with whom she usually has intercourse, the child she will bear is born resembling the adulterer. Now you who live together with the son of God, love not the world, but love the Lord, in order that those you will bring forth may not resemble the world, but may resemble the Lord.

The human being has intercourse with the human being. The horse has intercourse with the horse, the ass with the ass. Members of a race usually have associated [with] those of like race. So spirit mingles with spirit, and thought consorts with thought, and [light] shares [with light. If you (sg.)] are born a human being, it is [the human being] who will love you. If you become [a spirit], it is the spirit which will be joined to you. If you become thought, it is thought which will mingle with you. If you become light, it is the light which will share with you. If you become one of those who belong above, it is those who belong above who will rest upon you. If you become horse or ass or bull or dog or sheep or another of the animals which are outside or below, then neither human being nor spirit nor thought nor light will be able to love you. Neither those who belong above nor those who belong within will be able to rest in you, and you have no part in them.

He who is a slave against his will will be able to become free. He who has become free by the favor of his master and has sold himself into slavery will no longer be able to be free.

Farming in the world requires the cooperation of four essential elements. A harvest is gathered into the barn only as a result of the natural action of water, earth, wind, and light. God's farming likewise has four elements — faith, hope, love, and knowledge. Faith is our earth, that in which we take root. [And] hope is the water through which we are nourished. Love is the wind through which we grow. Knowledge then is the light through which we [ripen]. Grace exists in [four ways: it is] earthborn; it is heavenly; [...] the highest heaven; [...] in [...].

Blessed is the one who on no occasion caused a soul [...]. That person is Jesus Christ. He came to the whole place and did not burden anyone. Therefore, blessed is the one who is like this, because he is a perfect man. For the word tells us that this kind is difficult to
define. How shall we be able to accomplish such a great thing? How will he give everyone comfort? Above all, it is not proper to cause anyone distress — whether the person is great or small, unbeliever or believer — and then give comfort only to those who take satisfaction in good deeds. Some find it advantageous to give comfort to the one who has fared well. He who does good deeds cannot give comfort to such people; for he does not seize whatever he likes. He is unable to cause distress, however, since he does not afflict them. To be sure, the one who fares well sometimes causes people distress — not that he intends to do so; rather it is their own wickedness which is responsible for their distress. He who possesses the qualities (of the perfect man) bestows joy upon the good. Some, however, are terribly distressed by all this.

There was a householder who had every conceivable thing, be it son or slave or cattle or dog or pig or corn or barley or chaff or grass or meat and acorn. [Now he was] a sensible fellow and he knew what the food of each one was. He served the children bread. He served the slaves meal. And he threw barley and chaff and grass to the cattle. He threw bones to [the] dogs, and to the pigs he threw acorns and slop. Compare the disciple of God: if he is a sensible fellow he understands what discipleship is all about. The bodily forms will not deceive him, but he will look at the condition of the soul of each one and speak with him. There are many animals in the world which are in human form. When he identifies them, to the swine he will throw acorns, to the cattle he will throw barley and chaff and grass, to the dogs he will throw bones. To the slaves he will give only the elementary lessons, to the children he will give the complete instruction.

There is the son of man and there is the son of the son of man. The lord is the son of man, and the son of the son of man is he who creates through the son of man. The son of man received from God the capacity to create. He also has the ability to beget. He who has received the ability to create is a creature. He who has received the ability to beget is an offspring. He who creates cannot beget. He who begets also has power to create. Now they say, “He who creates begets.” But his so-called “offspring” is merely a creature. Because of birth, they are not his offspring but [. . .]. He who creates works openly and he himself is visible. He who begets begets in [private] and he himself is hidden, since [. . .] image. Also, he who creates creates openly. But one who begets children in pri-
vate. No [one can] 35 know when [the husband] 82 and the wife have intercourse with one another 1 except the two of them. Indeed marriage in the 1 world is a mystery for those who have taken 1 a wife. If there is a hidden quality to the marriage of defilement, 5 how much more is the undefiled marriage 1 a true mystery! It is not fleshly 1 but pure. It belongs not to desire 1 but to the will. It belongs not to the darkness 1 or the night but to the day and 10 the light. If a marriage is open to the public, 1 it has become prostitution, and the bride 1 plays the harlot not only when she is impregnated by another man 1 but even if she slips out of her bedroom 1 and is seen. 15 Let her show herself only to her father and her 1 mother and to the friend of the bridegroom and 1 the sons of the bridegroom. These are permitted 1 to enter every day into the bridal chamber. 1 But let the others yearn just 20 to listen to her voice and to enjoy 1 her ointment, and let them feed from the 1 crumbs that fall from the table, like the 1 dogs. Bridegrooms and 1 brides belong to the bridal chamber. No one shall be able 25 to see the bridegroom with the bride unless 1 [he become] such a one.

When Abraham 1 [. . .] that he was to see what he was to see, 1 [he circumcised] the flesh of the foreskin, teaching 1 us that it is proper to destroy the flesh. 30

[Most things] in the world, as long as their 1 [inner parts] are hidden, stand upright and live. 1 [If they are revealed] they die, as 1 is illustrated by the visible man: 1 [as long as] the intestines of the man are hidden, the man is alive; 83 when his intestines are exposed 1 and come out of him, the man will die. 1 So also with the tree: while its root 1 is hidden it sprouts and grows. If its 5 root is exposed, the tree dries up. 1 So it is with every birth that is in the world, 1 not only with the revealed 1 but with the hidden. For so long as the root 1 of wickedness is hidden, it is strong. But when it is recognized 10 it is dissolved. When it is revealed 1 it perishes. That is why the word says, 1 "Already the ax is laid at the root 1 of the trees" (Mt 3:10). It will not merely cut – what 1 is cut sprouts again – but the ax 15 penetrates deeply until it 1 brings up the root. Jesus pulled out 1 the root of the whole place, while others did it only 1 partially. As for ourselves, let each 1 one of us dig down after the root 20 of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it 1 out of one's heart from the root. It will be plucked out 1 if we recognize it. But if we 1 are ignorant of it, it takes root in 1 us and produces its fruit 25 in our heart. It masters us. 1 We are its slaves. It takes us captive, 1 to make us do what we do [not] want; 1 and what we do want we do [not] do. It 1 is powerful because we have not recognized it. While [it exists] 30 it is ac-
tive. Ignorance is the mother of [all evil]. Ignorance will result in [death, because] those that come from [ignorance] neither were nor [are] nor shall be. [...] will be perfect when all the truth is revealed. For truth is like ignorance: while it is hidden it rests in itself, but when it is revealed and is recognized, it is praised inasmuch as it is stronger than ignorance and error. It gives freedom. The word said, "If you (pl.) know the truth, the truth will make you free" (Jn 8:32). Ignorance is a slave. Knowledge is freedom. If we know the truth, we shall find the fruits of the truth within us. If we are joined to it, it will bring our fulfillment.

At the present time we have the manifest things of creation. We say, "The strong who are held in high regard are great people. And the weak who are despised are the obscure." Contrast the manifest things of truth: they are weak and despised, while the hidden things are strong and held in high regard. The mysteries of truth are revealed, though in type and image. The bridal chamber, however, remains hidden. It is the holy in the holy. The veil at first concealed how God controlled the creation, but when the veil is rent and the things inside are revealed, this house will be left desolate, or rather will be [destroyed]. And the whole (inferior) godhead will flee [from] here but not into the holies of the holies, for it will not be able to mix with the unmixed light and the flawless fullness, but will be under the wings of the cross and under its arms. This ark will be their salvation when the flood of water surges over them. If some belong to the order of the priesthood they will be able to go within the veil with the high priest. For this reason the veil was not rent at the top only, since it would have been open only to those above; nor was it rent at the bottom only, since it would have been revealed only to those below. But it was rent from top to bottom. Those above opened to us the things below, in order that we may go in to the secret of the truth. This truly is what is held in high regard (and) what is strong! But we shall go in there by means of lowly types and forms of weakness. They are lowly indeed when compared with the perfect glory. There is glory which surpasses glory. There is power which surpasses power. Therefore the perfect things have opened to us, together with the hidden things of truth. The holies of the holies were revealed, and the bridal chamber invited us in.

As long as it is hidden, wickedness is indeed ineffectual, but it has not been removed from the midst of the seed of the holy spirit. They are slaves of evil. But when it is revealed, then the perfect light will
flow out on every one. And all those who are in it will [receive the chrism]. Then the slaves will be free [and] the captives ransomed. "[Every] plant [which] my father who is in heaven [has not] planted [will be] plucked out" (Mt 15:13). Those who are separated will unite [...] and will be filled. Every one who will [enter] the bridal chamber will kindle the [light], for [...] just as in the marriages which are [...] happen at night. That fire [...] only at night and is put out. But the mysteries of that marriage are perfected rather in the day and the light. Neither that day nor its light ever sets. If anyone becomes a son of the bridal chamber, he will receive the light. If anyone does not receive it while he is here, he will not be able to receive it in the other place. He who will receive that light will not be seen, nor can he be detained. And none shall be able to torment a person like this even while he dwells in the world. And again when he leaves the world he has already received the truth in the images. The world has become the eternal realm (aeon), for the eternal realm is fullness for him. This is the way it is: it is revealed to him alone, not hidden in the darkness and the night, but hidden in a perfect day and a holy light.

The Gospel
According to Philip
THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE ARCHONS (II,4)

Introduced by
ROGER A. BULLARD

Translated by
BENTLEY LAYTON

The Hypostasis of the Archons ("Reality of the Rulers") is an anonymous tractate presenting an esoteric interpretation of Genesis 1-6, partially in the form of a revelation discourse between an angel and a questioner. While the treatise illustrates a wide-ranging Hellenistic syncretism, the most evident components are Jewish, although in its present form The Hypostasis of the Archons shows clearly Christian features and thus can be considered a Christian work. Its theological perspective is a vigorous Gnosticism of perhaps Sethian affiliation.

It is generally assumed that The Hypostasis of the Archons, like all the other Nag Hammadi texts, is a translation from Greek. The possibility of a Coptic pun on the phrase "beside me" (Is 46:9) and "blind" (Hyp. Arch. 86,30; 94,22), as well as the description of animal-headed Rulers (87,29) suggests that the provenance may have been Egypt.

The document is tentatively dated in the third century C.E. It is obviously no later than the fourth century, to which the Nag Hammadi collection is dated. But the well-developed gnostic treatment of the material in this document as well as the midrashic handling of scriptural material argue against an early date. Further, the philosophical orientation of 96,11-14 has been identified as typical of third-century Neoplatonism.

The questions of date and provenance are complicated by the possibility that the work as it stands is a result of a Christian editor's having combined a narrative source (interpreting parts of Genesis) with a revelation discourse concerned with soteriology and eschatology, and placing them both within a Christian framework.

The Hypostasis of the Archons is certainly the work of a gnostic teacher instructing an audience. While using previous material, he writes from a position of authority, even in the angelic revelation where a character in the discourse is ostensibly speaking. The audience is a Christian Gnostic community, aware of material of both testaments and accepting the authority of Paul. They are familiar with Jewish literary traditions, including apocalyptic. A traditional function of apocalyptic — providing reassurance for an insecure community — is operative here. The Hypostasis of the Archons is thus an esoteric work, written for a self-conscious community which probably felt pressure from a Christian community that defined itself as orthodox and others as heretical.

There is clearly some literary relationship between The Hypostasis of the Archons and On the Origin of the World, which follows this tractate in Codex II.
Both seem to draw from common sources. The latter mentions a *Book* or *Books of Norea* (102,11, 24-25), to which Epiphanius also refers. It has been suggested that *The Hypostasis of the Archons* is to be identified with that source, but without compelling evidence.

After a brief introduction quoting "the great apostle" Paul, *The Hypostasis of the Archons* offers its mythological narrative. The main characters in the mythological drama which unfolds include the blind ruler Samael, also called Sakla ("fool") and Yaldabaoth, who blasphemes against the divine; the spiritual Woman, who rouses Adam and outwits the rapacious rulers; the Snake, the Instructor, who counsels the man and woman to eat of the fruit forbidden by the rulers; and Norea, the daughter of Eve, a virgin pure in character and exalted in knowledge. On page 93 of the tractate the focus changes somewhat: on center stage now is the great angel Eleleth, who reveals to Norea the origin and destiny of the archontic powers.

*The Hypostasis of the Archons* proclaims, as its title indicates, the reality of the archontic rulers: far from being merely fictitious, imaginary powers, the archons are all too real. These rulers indeed exist. This is a grim reality for the Christian Gnostics, who define their own spiritual nature in opposition to that of the ruling and enslaving authorities. Yet, as this document promises, the Christian Gnostics can have hope, for their spiritual nature will be more lasting than the archons, and their heavenly destiny will be more glorious. In the end the rulers will perish, and the Gnostics, the children of the light, will know the Father and praise him.

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**THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE ARCHONS**

II 86, 20-97, 23

On account of the reality (*hypostasis*) of the authorities (*eksousiai*), (inspired) by the spirit of the father of truth, the great apostle — referring to the "authorities of the darkness" (Col 1:13) — told us that "our contest is not against flesh and [blood]; rather, the authorities of the universe and the spirits of wickedness" (Ep 6:12). [I have] sent (you) this because you inquire about the reality [of the] authorities.

Their chief is blind; [because of his] power and his ignorance [and his] arrogance he said, with his [power], "It is I who am God; there is none [apart from me]."

When he said this, he sinned against [the entirety]. And this speech got up to incorruptibility; then there was a voice that came forth from incorruptibility, saying, "You are mistaken, Samael" — which is, "god of the blind."

His thoughts became blind. And, having expelled his power — that
is, the blasphemy he had spoken — he pursued it down to chaos and the abyss, his mother, at the instigation of Pistis Sophia (Faith Wisdom). And she established each of his offspring in conformity with its power — after the pattern of the realms that are above, for by starting from the invisible world the visible world was invented.

As incorruptibility looked down into the region of the waters, her image appeared in the waters; and the authorities of the darkness became enamored of her. But they could not lay hold of that image, which had appeared to them in the waters, because of their weakness — since beings that merely possess a soul cannot lay hold of those that possess a spirit — for they were from below, while it was from above.

This is the reason why "incorruptibility looked down into the region (etc.)": so that, by the father's will, she might bring the entirety into union with the light. The rulers (archontes) laid plans and said, "Come, let us create a man that will be soil from the earth."

They modelled their creature as one wholly of the earth. Now the rulers body they have female is with the face of a beast. They had taken some soil from the earth and modelled their man, after their body and after the image of God that had appeared to them in the waters.

They said, "[Come, let] us lay hold of it by means of the form that we have modelled, [so that] it may see its male counterpart, and we may seize it with the form that we have modelled" — not understanding the force of God, because of their powerlessness. And he breathed into his face; and the man came to have a soul (and remained) upon the ground many days. But they could not make him arise because of their powerlessness. Like storm winds they persisted (in blowing), that they might try to capture that image, which had appeared to them in the waters. And they did not know the identity of its power.

Now all these (events) came to pass by the will of the father of the entirety. Afterwards, the spirit saw the soul-endowed man upon the ground. And the spirit came forth from the Adamantine Land; it descended and came to dwell within him, and that man became a living soul.

It called his name Adam since he was found moving upon the ground. A voice came forth from incorruptibility for the assistance of Adam; and the rulers gathered together all the animals of the earth and all the birds of heaven and brought them in to Adam to see what
Adam would call them, \footnote{1} that he might give a name to each of the birds \footnote{1} and all the beasts.

They took Adam \footnote{25} \[and\] put him in the garden, that he might cultivate \footnote{1} [it] and keep watch over it. And the rulers issued a command \footnote{1} to him, saying, "From [every] tree \footnote{1} in the garden shall you (sg.) eat; \footnote{1} yet \footnote{\footnotemark} \[from\] the tree of recognizing good \footnote{30} and evil do not eat, nor \footnote{1} [touch] it; for the day you (pl.) eat \footnote{1} [from] it, with death you (pl.) are going to die."

They \footnote{1} \[\ldots\] this. They do not understand what \footnote{1} [they have said] to him; rather, by the father's will, \footnote{89} they said this in such a way that he \footnote{1} might (in fact) eat, and that Adam might <not> regard them as would a man of an exclusively \footnote{1} material nature.

The rulers took counsel \footnote{1} with one another and said, "Come, let us cause \footnote{5} a deep sleep to fall upon Adam." And he slept. \footnote{1} \[\ldots\] Now the deep sleep that they \footnote{1} "caused to fall upon him, and he slept" is Ignorance. \footnote{\ldots} They opened \footnote{1} his side like a living woman. \footnote{1} And they built up his side with some flesh \footnote{10} in place of her, and Adam came to be endowed \footnote{1} only with soul.

And the spirit-endowed woman \footnote{1} came to him and spoke with him, saying, \footnote{1} "Arise, Adam." And when he saw her, \footnote{1} he said, "It is you who have given me life; \footnote{15} you will be called 'Mother of the living.' \footnote{1} \[\ldots\] For it is she who is my mother. It is she who is the physician, \footnote{1} and the woman, and she who has given birth."

Then the \footnote{1} authorities came up to their Adam. \footnote{1} And when they saw his female counterpart speaking with him, \footnote{20} they became agitated with great agitation; \footnote{1} and they became enamored of her. They said to one another, \footnote{1} "Come, let us sow our seed \footnote{1} in her," and they pursued her. \footnote{1} And she laughed at them for their witlessness \footnote{25} and their blindness; and in their clutches, she became a tree, \footnote{1} and left before them her shadowy reflection resembling herself; \footnote{1} and they defiled [it] \footnote{1} fouly. \footnote{\ldots} And they defiled the stamp of \footnote{1} her voice, so that \footnote{30} by the form they had modelled, together with [their] (own) image, they made themselves liable to condemnation. \footnote{1}

Then the female spiritual principle came [in] \footnote{1} the snake, the instructor; and it taught [them], \footnote{1} saying, "What did he [say to] \footnote{1} you (pl.)? Was it, 'From every tree in the garden \footnote{35} shall you (sg.) eat; yet \[from\] the tree \footnote{90} of recognizing evil and good \footnote{1} do not eat'?"

The carnal woman said, \footnote{1} "Not only did he say 'Do not eat,' but even \footnote{1} 'Do not touch it; for the day you (pl.) eat from it, with death you (pl.) are going to die.'" \footnote{1}
And the snake, the instructor, said, "With death you shall not die; for it was out of jealousy that he said this to you. Rather your eyes shall open and you shall come to be like gods, recognizing evil and good." And the female instructing principle was taken away from the snake, and she left it behind merely a thing of the earth.

And the carnal woman took from the tree and ate; and she gave to her husband as well as herself; and these beings that possessed only a soul, ate. And their imperfection became apparent in their lack of acquaintance; and they recognized that they were naked of the spiritual element, and took fig leaves and bound them upon their loins.

Then the chief ruler came; and he said, "Adam! Where are you?" for he did not understand what had happened.

And Adam said, "I heard your voice and was afraid because I was naked; and I hid."

The ruler said, "Why did you hide, unless it is because you have eaten from the tree from which alone I commanded you not to eat? And you have eaten!"

Adam said, "The woman that you gave me, she gave to me and I ate." And the arrogant ruler cursed the woman.

The woman said, "It was the snake that led me astray and I ate." [They turned] to the snake and cursed its shadowy reflection, powerless, not comprehending that it was a form they themselves had modelled. From that day, the snake came to be under the curse of the authorities; until the all-powerful man was to come, that curse fell upon the snake.

They turned to their Adam and took him and expelled him from the garden along with his wife; for they have no blessing, since they too are beneath the curse.

Moreover they threw mankind into great distraction and into a life of toil, so that their mankind might be occupied by worldly affairs, and might not have the opportunity of being devoted to the holy spirit.

Now afterwards, she bore Cain, their son; and Cain cultivated the land. Thereupon he knew his wife; again becoming pregnant, she bore Abel; and Abel was a herdsman of sheep. Now Cain brought in from the crops of his field, but Abel brought in an offering (from) among his lambs. God looked upon the votive offerings of Abel; but he did not accept the votive offerings of Cain. And carnal Cain pursued Abel his brother.
And God said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

He answered, saying, "Am I, then, my brother's keeper?"

God said to Cain, "Listen! The voice of your brother's blood is crying up to me! You have sinned with your mouth. It will return to you: anyone who kills Cain will let loose seven vengeances, and you will exist groaning and trembling upon the earth."

And Adam [knew] his female counterpart Eve, and she became pregnant, and bore [Seth] to Adam. And she said, "I have borne another man through God, in place [of Abel]."

Again Eve became pregnant, and she bore [Norea]. And she said, "He has begotten on me a virgin as an assistance for many generations of mankind." She is the virgin whom the forces did not defile.

Then mankind began to multiply and improve.

The rulers took counsel with one another and said, "Come, let us cause a deluge with our hands and obliterate all flesh, from man to beast."

But when the ruler of the forces came to know of their decision, he said to Noah, "Make yourself an ark from some wood that does not rot and hide in it — you and your children and the beasts and the birds of heaven from small to large — and set it upon Mount Sir."

Then Orea came to him wanting to board the ark. And when he would not let her, she blew upon the ark and caused it to be consumed by fire. Again he made the ark, for a second time.

The rulers went to meet her intending to lead her astray. Their supreme chief said to her, "Your mother Eve came to us."

But Norea turned to them and said to them, "It is you who are the rulers of the darkness; you are accursed. And you did not know my mother; instead it was your female counterpart that you knew. For I am not your descendant; rather it is from the world above that I am come."

The arrogant ruler turned, with all his might, [and] his countenance came to be like (a) black [ ]; he said to her presumptuously, "You must render service to us, [as did] also your mother Eve; for I have been given (?) ."

But Norea turned, with the might of [ ]; and in a loud voice [she] cried out [up to] the holy one, the God of the entirety, "Rescue me from the rulers of unrighteousness and save me from their clutches — forthwith!"

The angel came down from the heavens and said to her, "Why are you crying up to God? Why do you act so boldly towards the holy spirit?"
Norea said, "Who are you?"  

The rulers of unrighteousness had withdrawn from her. He said, "It is I who am Eleleth, sagacity, the great angel, who stands in the presence of the holy spirit. I have been sent to speak with you and save you from the grasp of the lawless. And I shall teach you about your root."

— Now as for that angel, I cannot speak of his power: his appearance is like fine gold and his raiment is like snow. No, truly, my mouth cannot bear to speak of his power and the appearance of his face!

Eleleth, the great angel, spoke to me. "It is I," he said, "who am understanding. I am one of the four light-givers, who stand in the presence of the great invisible spirit. Do you think these rulers have any power over you? None of them can prevail against the root of truth; for on its account he appeared in the final ages; and these authorities will be restrained. And these authorities cannot defile you and that generation; for your abode is in incorruptibility, where the virgin spirit dwells, who is superior to the authorities of chaos and to their universe."

But I said, Sir, teach me about the faculty of these authorities — how did they come into being, and by what kind of genesis, and of what material, and who created them and their force?"

And the great angel Eleleth, understanding, spoke to me: "Within limitless realms dwells incorruptibility. Sophia, who is called Pistis, wanted to create something, alone without her consort; and her product was a celestial thing.

"A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below; and shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that shadow became matter; and that shadow was projected apart. And what she had created became a product in the matter, like an aborted fetus. And it assumed a plastic form molded out of shadow, and became an arrogant beast resembling a lion." It was androgynous, as I have already said, because it was from matter that it derived.

"Opening his eyes he saw a vast quantity of matter without limit; and he became arrogant, saying, 'It is I who am God, and there is none other apart from me.'

"When he said this, he sinned against the entirety. And a voice came forth from above the realm of absolute power, saying, 'You are mistaken, Samael' — which is, 'god of the blind.'

"And he said, 'If any other thing exists before me, let it become
visible to me!' And immediately Sophia stretched forth her finger and introduced light into matter; and she pursued it down to the region of chaos. And she returned up [to] her light; once again darkness matter.

"This ruler, by being androgynous, made himself a vast realm, an extent without limit. And he contemplated creating offspring for himself, and created for himself seven offspring, androgynous just like their parent.

"And he said to his offspring, 'It is I who am the god of the entirety.' "And Zoe (Life), the daughter of Pistis Sophia, cried out and said to him, 'You are mistaken, Sakla!' — for which the alternate name is Yaltabaoth. She breathed into his face, and her breath became a fiery angel for her; and that angel bound Yaldabaoth and cast him down into Tartaros below the abyss.

"Now when his offspring Sabaoth saw the force of that angel, he repented and condemned his father and his mother matter.

"He loathed her, but he sang songs of praise up to Sophia and her daughter Zoe. And Sophia and Zoe caught him up and gave him charge of the seventh heaven, below the veil between above and below. And he is called 'God of the forces, Sabaoth,' since he is up above the forces of chaos, for Sophia established him.

"Now when these (events) had come to pass, he made himself a huge four-faced chariot of cherubim, and infinitely many angels to act as ministers, and also harps and lyres.

"And Sophia took her daughter Zoe and had her sit upon his right to teach him about the things that exist in the eighth (heaven); and the angel of wrath she placed upon his left. [Since] that day, [his right] has been called life; and the left has come to represent the unrighteousness of the realm of absolute power above. It was before your time that they came into being (text corrupt?).

"Now when Yaldabaoth saw him in this great splendor and at this height, he envied him; and the envy became an androgynous product. and this was the origin of envy. And envy engendered death; and death engendered his offspring and gave each of them charge of its heaven; and all the heavens of chaos became full of their multitudes.

"But it was by the will of the father of the entirety that they all came into being — after the pattern of all the things above — so that the sum of chaos might be attained.

"There, I have taught you about the pattern of the rulers; and the matter in which it was expressed; and their parent; and their universe."
But I said, "Sir, am I also from their matter?"

"You, together with your offspring, are from the primeval father; from above, out of the imperishable light, their souls are come. Thus the authorities cannot approach them because of the spirit of truth present within them; and all who have become acquainted with this way exist deathless in the midst of dying mankind. Still that sown element (sperma) will not become known now.

"Instead, after three generations it will come to be known, and has freed them from the bondage of the authorities' error."

Then I said, "Sir, how much longer?"

He said to me, "Until the moment when the true man, within a modelled form, reveals the existence of (?) [the spirit of] truth, which the father has sent.

"Then he will teach them about everything: And he will anoint them with the unction of life eternal, given him from the undominated generation.

"Then they will be freed of blind thought: And they will trample under foot death, which is of the authorities: And they will ascend into the limitless light, where this sown element belongs.

"Then the authorities will relinquish their ages: And their angels will weep over their destruction: And their demons will lament their death.

"Then all the children of the light will be truly acquainted with the truth and their root, and the father of the entirety and the holy spirit: They will all say with a single voice, 'The father's truth is just, and the son presides over the entirety': And from everyone unto the ages of ages, 'Holy — holy — holy! Amen!'"
ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD (II,5 AND XIII,2)

Introduced by
HANS- Gebhard Bethge

Translated by
HANS- Gebhard Bethge, Bentley Layton,
Societas Coptica Hierosolymitana

The text of this tractate is quite well preserved. It is a compendium of central gnostic ideas, especially on cogmogony, anthropogony, and eschatology. Based on various sources and traditions, the treatise is in part presented in a semi-scholarly style, with numerous etiologies and etymologies. It is in the form of an apologetic tract designed for public effectiveness in attracting adherents. Earthly history, but also the presentation of the world above, including its development, are largely ignored. On the basis of the unnamed and unknown author’s intention, stated at the beginning and then carried through in the text itself, scholarship has assigned the document the hypothetical title On the Origin of the World.

There are good reasons to assume that we have to do with a conscious, well-planned literary composition without extensive secondary alterations, rather than with the product of a rather long process in the transmission of tradition. The early fourth century could possibly be the time of composition. The remarkable mixture of various kinds of Jewish views, Manichaean elements, Christian ideas, Greek philosophical conceptions, and figures of Greek or Hellenistic mythology, magic, and astrology, as well as a clear emphasis on Egyptian thought, all point to Alexandria as the probable place of origin for the Greek original of On the Origin of the World. The process of translating into Coptic may have involved several stages. The seemingly corrupt condition of many passages that invite emendation, along with other difficult, often barely intelligible, parts could be explained by assuming that the text as it lies before us still represents a provisional stage in the process of translation. On the Origin of the World would thus be an “opus imperfectum” (B. Layton).

The author uses various sources and traditions, some gnostic, some not, that are difficult to define more closely in terms of literary criticism, much less to reconstruct. In the process there are on occasion tensions, unevenness, and contradictions, since at least a few of these traditions or works presuppose a very special system all their own, or contain other tendencies, e.g., Sethian, or Valentinian, or even Manichaean. On the Origin of the World itself offers no closed system of its own, nor does it represent one of the known gnostic systems. The author works with direct or indirect quotations, references, summaries, explanations, and etymologies, which stand in sharp contrast to the otherwise dominant narrative style. This way of working, defending one’s own view by appeal or reference to other works, is intended as a demonstration of a substantive and convincing
argumentation. *On the Origin of the World* has many parallels with *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, indicating a close relation between the two texts. Yet the dissimilar nature of both documents, the diverging world views, and numerous differences in details, indicate that direct literary relationships are rather improbable. The parallelism probably results from the use of the same source material.

The cosmogony and anthropogony that follow upon the semi-philosophical beginning are in part oriented to Genesis 1-2, but beyond that to concepts such as those known from Jubilees or the Enoch literature. In general, characteristically Jewish influences dominate, e.g., in the angelology, demonology, and eschatology, as well as in etymologies. The gnostic reinterpretation of the received material varies considerably. It extends from complete reevaluation, e.g., in the case of the demiurge's presumption (making use of Is 45:5; 46:9 LXX), and what took place in Genesis 3, on to relatively unbroken appropriation of Jewish ideas and motifs, such as the presentation of paradise.

The primordial history emphasizes the creation of the earthly man by the Archons, in connection with the doctrine of the primal man, which to be sure is hard to understand, due to varying motifs and heterogeneous concepts. On the other hand, the primordial history initiates already the story of redemption on the part of Pistis Sophia or Sophia Zoe, who are encountered or act in various ways. In this complex soteriology, however, Jesus Christ has no central function, but rather a marginal role. For these reasons *On the Origin of the World* belongs to the gnostic Nag Hammadi texts that are essentially non-Christian.

*On the Origin of the World* is oriented towards universal eschatology. This is shown by the many allusions to the end, as well as by the broad presentation of the final events with a massive appropriation of thoughts, terms, and motifs from apocalypticism. The final state, brought about by the higher world, distinguishing the redemption of the gnostics from the destruction of the creation together with its creator, surpasses the primal condition, and renders impossible a repetition of events such as these presented in *On the Origin of the World*.

*On the Origin of the World* is a significant gnostic work. We attain through this relatively long document a good insight into an educated author's thinking, work habits, and argumentation on fundamental themes. Furthermore, *On the Origin of the World* shows to what a high degree and with what freedom and authority a gnostic author makes use of foreign, even non-gnostic and heterogeneous thoughts. It thus attests the greater importance ascribed to the gnostic stance toward the world and existence than to its mythological formulation. *On the Origin of the World* can help us understand how the gnostic world view, in debate with other intellectual currents, but also making use of them, could maintain itself or perhaps at times even win the field.

**ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD**

II 97, 24-127, 17

Seeing that everybody, gods of the world and mankind, says that nothing existed prior to chaos, I in distinction to them shall demon-
strate that they are all mistaken, because they are not acquainted with the origin of chaos, nor with its root. Here is the demonstration. How well it suits all men, on the subject of chaos, to say that it is a kind of darkness! But in fact it comes from a shadow, which has been called by the name darkness. And the shadow comes from a product that has existed since the beginning. It is, moreover, clear that it (viz., the product) existed before chaos came into being, and that the latter is posterior to the first product.

Let us therefore concern ourselves with the facts of the matter; and furthermore, with the first product, from which chaos was projected. And in this way the truth will be clearly demonstrated.

After the natural structure of the immortal beings had completely developed out of the infinite, a likeness then emanated from Pistis (Faith); it is called Sophia (Wisdom). It exercised volition and became a product resembling the primeval light. And immediately her will manifested itself as a likeness of heaven, having an unimaginable magnitude; it was between the immortal beings and those things that came into being after them, like ...: she (Sophia) functioned as a veil dividing mankind from the things above.

Now the eternal realm (aeon) of truth has no shadow outside it, for the limitless light is everywhere within it. But its exterior is shadow, which has been called by the name darkness. From it there appeared a force, presiding over the darkness. And the forces that came into being subsequent to them called the shadow "the limitless chaos." From it, every [kind] of divinity sprouted up together with the entire place, [so that] also, [shadow] is posterior to the first product. It was (in) the abyss that [it] (shadow) appeared, deriving from the aforementioned Pistis.

Then shadow perceived that there was something mightier than it, and felt envy; and when it had become pregnant of its own accord, suddenly it engendered jealousy. Since that day, the principle of jealousy amongst all the eternal realms and their worlds has been apparent. Now as for that jealousy, it was found to be an abortion without any spirit in it. Like a shadow it came into existence in a vast watery substance. Then the bile that had come into being out of the shadow was thrown into a part of chaos. Since that day, a watery substance has been apparent. And what sank within it flowed away, being visible in chaos: as with a woman giving birth to a child — all her superfluities flow out; just so, matter came into being out of shadow and was projected apart. And it (viz., matter) did not depart from chaos; rather, matter was in chaos, being in a part of it.
And when these things had come to pass, then Pistis came and appeared over the matter of chaos, which had been expelled like an aborted fetus — since there was no spirit in it. For all of it (viz., chaos) was limitless darkness and bottomless water. Now when Pistis saw what had resulted from her defect, she became disturbed. And the disturbance appeared, as a fearful product; it rushed to her in the chaos. She turned to it and [blew] into its face in the abyss, which is below all the heavens.

And when Pistis Sophia desired to cause the thing that had no spirit to be formed into a likeness and to rule over matter and over all her forces, there appeared for the first time a ruler, out of the waters, lionlike in appearance, androgynous, having great authority within him, and ignorant of whence he had come into being. Now when Pistis Sophia saw him moving about in the depth of the waters she said to him, “Child, pass through to here,” whose equivalent is “yalda baôth.”

Since that day there appeared the principle of verbal expression, which reached the gods and the angels and mankind. And what came into being as a result of verbal expression, the gods and the angels and mankind finished. Now as for the ruler Yaltabaoth, he is ignorant of the force of Pistis: he did not see her face, rather he saw in the water the likeness that spoke with him. And because of that voice, he called himself Yaldabaoth. But Ariael is what the perfect call him, for he was like a lion. Now when he had come to have authority over matter, Pistis Sophia withdrew up to her light.

When the ruler saw his magnitude — and it was only himself that he saw: he saw nothing else, except for water and darkness — then he supposed that it was he alone who existed. His [...] was completed by verbal expression: it appeared as a spirit moving to and fro upon the waters. And when that spirit appeared, the ruler set apart the watery substance. And what was dry was divided into another place. And from matter he made for himself an abode, and he called it heaven. And from matter, the ruler made a footstool, and he called it earth.

Next, the ruler had a thought — consistent with his nature — and by means of verbal expression he created an androgyne. He opened his mouth and cooed to him. When his eyes had been opened, he looked at his father, and he said to him, “Eee!” Then his father called him Eee-a-o (Yao). Next he created the second son. He cooed to him. And he opened his eyes and said to his father, “Eh!” His
father called him Eloai. Next he created the third son. He cooed to him. And he opened his eyes and said to his father, “Asss!” His father called him Astaphaios. These are the three sons of their father.

Seven appeared in chaos, androgynous. They have their masculine names and their feminine names. The feminine name is Pronoia (Forethought) Sambathas, which is “week.” And his son is called Yao: his feminine name is Lordship.

Sabaoth: his feminine name is Deity.
Adonaios: his feminine name is Kingship.
Eloaios: his feminine name is Jealousy.
Oraios: his feminine name is Wealth.

And Astaphaios: his feminine name is Sophia (Wisdom).

These are the seven forces of the seven heavens of chaos. And they were born androgynous, consistent with the immortal pattern that existed before them, according to the wish of Pistis: so that the likeness of what had existed since the beginning might reign to the end.

You will find the effect of these names and the force of the male entities in the Archangelic (Book) of the Prophet Moses, and the names of the female entities in the first Book (biblos) of Noraia.

Now the prime parent Yaldabaoth, since he possessed great authorities, created heavens for each of his offspring through verbal expression — created them beautiful, as dwelling places — and in each heaven he created great glories, seven times excellent. Thrones and mansions and temples, and also chariots and virgin spirits up to an invisible one and their glories, each one has these in his heaven; mighty armies of gods and lords and angels and archangels — countless myriads — so that they might serve.

The account of these matters you will find in a precise manner in the first Account of Oraia.

And they were completed from this heaven to as far up as the sixth heaven, namely that of Sophia. The heaven and his earth were destroyed by the troublemaker that was below them all. And the six heavens shook violently; for the forces of chaos knew who it was that had destroyed the heaven that was below them. And when Pistis knew about the breakage resulting from the disturbance, she sent forth her breath and bound him and cast him down into Tartaros. Since that day, the heaven, along with its earth, has consolidated itself through Sophia the daughter of Yaldabaoth, she who is below them all.

Now when the heavens had consolidated themselves along with their
forces and all their administration, the prime parent became insolent. And he was honored by all the army of angels. And all the gods and their angels gave blessing and honor to him. And for his part he was delighted and continually boasted, saying to them, ‘I have no need of anyone.’ He said, ‘It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists apart from me.’ And when he said this, he sinned against all the immortal beings who give answer. And they laid it to his charge.

Then when Pistis saw the impiety of the chief ruler she was filled with anger. She was invisible. She said, ‘You are mistaken, Samael,’ that is, ‘blind god.’ ‘There is an immortal man of light who has been in existence before you and who will appear among your modelled forms; he will trample you to scorn just as potter’s clay is pounded. And you will descend to your mother, the abyss, along with those that belong to you. For at the consummation of your (pl.) works the entire defect that has become visible out of the truth will be abolished, and it will cease to be and will be like what has never been.’ Saying this, Pistis revealed her likeness of her greatness in the waters. And so doing she withdrew up to her light.

Now when Sabaoth the son of Yaldabaoth heard the voice of Pistis, he sang praises to her, and he condemned the father at the word of Pistis; and he praised her because she had instructed them about the immortal man and his light. Then Pistis Sophia stretched out her finger and poured upon him some light from her light, to be a condemnation of his father. Then when Sabaoth was illumined, he received great authority against all the forces of chaos. Since that day he has been called ‘Lord of the Forces.’

He hated his father, the darkness, and his mother, the abyss, and loathed his sister, the thought of the prime parent, which moved to and fro upon the waters. And because of his light all the authorities of chaos were jealous of him. And when they had become disturbed, they made a great war in the seven heavens. Then when Pistis Sophia had seen the war, she dispatched seven archangels to Sabaoth from her light. They snatched him up to the seventh heaven. They stood before him as attendants. Furthermore she sent him three more archangels and established the kingdom for him over everyone so that he might dwell above the twelve gods of chaos.

Now when Sabaoth had taken up the place of repose in return for his repentance, Pistis also gave him her daughter Zoe (Life) together with great authority so that she might instruct him about all things that...
exist in the eighth heaven. 1 And as he had authority, 1 he made himself first of all a mansion. 1 It is huge, magnificent, 1 seven times as great as all those that exist 35 in the seven heavens.

And before 105 his mansion he created a throne, 1 which was huge and was upon a 1 four-faced chariot called 1 "Cherubin." Now the Cherubin has 5 eight shapes per each of 1 the four corners, lion forms and 1 calf forms and human forms 1 and eagle forms, so that all the forms 1 amount to sixty-four forms 10 — and (he created) seven archangels that stand 1 before it; he is the eighth, and has 1 authority. All the forms amount to 1 seventy-two. Furthermore, from this chariot 1 the seventy-two gods took shape; 15 they took shape so that they might rule over the seventy-two 1 languages of the peoples. And by that throne 1 he created other, 1 serpent-like angels, called 1 "Saraphin," which praise him at all times. 20

Thereafter he created a congregation (ekklesia) of angels, thousands and myriads, numberless, 1 which resembled the congregation in 1 the eighth heaven; and a firstborn 1 called Israel — which 25 is, "the man that sees God"; and another being, 1 called Jesus Christ, who resembles the savior 1 above in the eighth heaven and who 1 sits at his right upon a 1 revered throne, and at his left, there 30 sits the virgin of the holy spirit, 1 upon a throne and glorifying him. 1 And the seven virgins stand before her, 1 ... possessing thirty harps, 1 and psalteries and 106 trumpets, glorifying him. And 1 all the armies of the angels glorify him, 1 and they bless him. Now where he sits is upon a 1 throne of light within a 1 great cloud that covers 5 him. And there was no one with him 1 in the cloud except Sophia 1 the daughter of 1 Pistis, 1 instructing him about all the things that exist in the eighth heaven, 1 so that the likenesses of those things might be created, 1 in order that his reign might endure 10 until the consummation of the heavens of chaos 1 and their forces.

Now Pistis Sophia 1 set him apart from the darkness and summoned him to her right, 1 and the prime parent she put at her left. 1 Since that day, right has been called 15 justice, and left called 1 wickedness. Now because of this they all received 1 a realm (kosmos) in the congregation of justice 1 and wickedness, ... stand ... upon a creature ... 1 all.

Thus when the prime parent of chaos 20 saw his son Sabaoth and the glory 1 that he was in, and perceived that he was greatest of all the authorities 1 of chaos, he envied him. And 1 having become wrathful he engendered Death out of his 1 death: and he (viz., Death) was established over the sixth 25 heaven, 1 for Sabaoth had been snatched up from
there. ¹ And thus the number ¹ of the six authorities of chaos was achieved. Then Death, ¹ being androgynous, mingled with his (own) nature ¹ and begot seven androgynous offspring. ³⁰ These are the names of the male ones: Jealousy, Wrath, ¹ Tears, Sighing, Suffering, Lamentation, ¹ Bitter Weeping. And these are the names ¹ of the female ones: Wrath, Pain, Lust, ¹ Sighing, Curse, Bitterness, Quarrelsomeness. ³⁵ They had intercourse with one another, and each ¹ one begot seven, so that they amount to ¹ ¹⁰⁷ forty-nine androgynous demons. ¹

Their names and their effects you will find ¹ in the Book of Solomon. ¹

And in the presence of these, Zoe, who ¹⁵ was with Sabaoth, created seven ¹ good androgynous forces. ¹ These are the names of the male ones: the Unenvious, ¹ the Blessed, the Joyful, the True, ¹ the Unbe­grudging, the Beloved, ¹⁰ the Trustworthy. Also, as regards the female ones, these are their ¹ names: Peace, Gladness, Rejoicing, Blessedness, ¹ Truth, Love, Faith (Pistis). And ¹ from these there are many good ¹ and innocent spirits.

Their influences ¹⁵ and their effects you will find in ¹ the Configura­tions of the Fate of Heaven That Is ¹ Beneath the Twelve. ¹

And having seen the likeness ¹ of Pistis in the waters, the prime parent grieved very much, ²⁰ especially when he heard her voice, ¹ like the first voice that had ¹ called to him out of the waters. And ¹ when he knew that it was she who had given a name ¹ to him, he sighed. He was ashamed on account of his ²⁵ transgression. And when he had come to know in truth ¹ that an immortal man ¹ of light had been existing before him, he was greatly disturbed; ¹ for he had previously said ¹ to all the gods and their angels, ³⁰ “It is I who am god. No other one ¹ exists apart from me.” For he had been afraid ¹ they might know that another ¹ had been in existence before him, and might condemn him. But he, be­ing devoid of understanding, ³⁵ scoffed at the condemnation ¹ and acted recklessly. He said, “If ¹⁰⁸ anything has existed before me, let it appear, ¹ so that we may see its light.”

And ¹ immediately, behold! Light came out of the eighth heaven ¹ above and passed through all of the heavens ⁵ of the earth. When the prime parent saw that the light was beautiful as it radiated, ¹ he was amazed. And he was greatly ashamed. As ¹ that light appeared, a human likeness ¹ appeared within it, very wonderful. ¹⁰ And no one saw it except for ¹ the prime parent and Pronoia, ¹ who was with him. Yet its light appeared ¹ to all the forces of the heavens. Because of this ¹ they were all troubled by it.

Then ¹⁵ when Pronoia saw that emissary, she became enamored of
him. But he hated her because she was on the darkness. But she desired to embrace him, and she was not able to. When she was unable to assuage her love, she poured out her light upon the earth. Since that day, that emissary has been called “Adam of Light,” whose rendering is “the luminous man of blood,” and the earth spread over him, holy Adaman, whose rendering is “the Holy Land of Adamantine.” Since that day, all the authorities have honored the blood of the virgin. And the earth was purified on account of the blood of the virgin. But most of all, the water was purified through the likeness of Pistis Sophia, who had appeared to the prime parent in the waters. Justly, then, it has been said: “through the waters.” The holy water, since it vivifies the all, purifies it.

Out of that first blood Eros appeared, being androgynous. His masculinity is Himireris (i.e., Himeros), being fire from the light. His femininity, that is with him — a soul of blood — is from the stuff of Pronoia. He is very lovely in his beauty, having a charm beyond all the creatures of chaos. Then all the gods and their angels, when they beheld Eros, became enamored of him. And appearing in all of them he set them afire: just as from a single lamp many lamps are lit, and one and the same light is there, but the lamp is not diminished. And in this way Eros became dispersed in all the created beings of chaos, and was not diminished. Just as from the midpoint of light and darkness Eros appeared and at the midpoint of the angels and mankind the sexual union of Eros was consummated, so out of the earth the primal pleasure blossomed. The woman followed earth. Birth followed marriage. Dissolution followed birth.

After that Eros, the grapevine sprouted up out of that blood, which had been shed over the earth. Because of this, those who drink of it conceive the desire of sexual union. After the grapevine, a fig tree and a pomegranate tree sprouted up from the earth, together with the rest of the trees, all species, having within them their seed from the seed of the authorities and their angels.

Then Justice created Paradise, being beautiful and being outside the orbit of the moon and the orbit of the sun in the Land of Wantonness, in the East in the midst of the stones. And desire is in the midst of the beautiful, appetizing trees. And the tree of eternal life is as it appeared by God’s will, to the north of Paradise, so that it might make eternal the souls of the pure, who shall come forth from the modelled forms of poverty at the consummation of the age. Now the
color of the tree of life is like the sun. And its branches are beautiful. Its leaves are like those of the cypress. Its fruit is like a bunch of grapes when it is white. Its height goes as far as heaven. And next to it (is) the tree of acquaintance (gnosis), having the strength of God. Its glory is like the moon when fully radiant. And its branches are beautiful. Its leaves are like fig leaves. Its fruit is like a good appetizing date. And this tree is to the north of Paradise, so that it might arouse the souls from the torpor of the demons, in order that they might approach the tree of life and eat of its fruit and so condemn the authorities and their angels.

The effect of this tree is described in the Sacred Book, to wit: "It is you who are the tree of acquaintance, which is in Paradise, from which the first man ate and which opened his mind; and he loved his female counterpart and condemned the other, alien likenesses and loathed them."

Now after it, the olive tree sprouted up, which was to purify the kings and the high priests of righteousness, who were to appear in the last days, since the olive tree appeared out of the light of the first Adam for the sake of the unguent that they were to receive.

And the first soul (psyche) loved Eros, who was with her, and poured her blood upon him and upon the earth. And out of that blood the rose first sprouted up, out of the earth, out of the thorn bush, to be a source of joy for the light that was to appear in the bush. Moreover after this the beautiful, good-smelling flowers sprouted up from the earth, different kinds, from every single virgin of the daughters of Pronoia. And they, when they had become enamored of Eros, poured out their blood upon him and upon the earth. After these, every plant sprouted up from the earth, different kinds, containing the seed of the authorities and their angels. After these, the authorities created out of the waters all species of beast, and the reptiles and birds - different kinds - containing the seed of the authorities and their angels.

But before all these, when he had appeared on the first day, he remained upon the earth, something like two days, and left the lower Pronoia in heaven, and ascended towards his light. And immediately darkness covered all the universe. Now when she wished, the Sophia who was in the lower heaven received authority from Pistis, and fashioned great luminous bodies and all the stars. And she put them in the sky to shine upon the earth and to render temporal signs and seasons and years and months and days and nights and moments and so
forth. And in this way the entire region upon the sky was adorned.

Now when Adam of Light conceived the wish to enter his light — i.e., the eighth heaven — he was unable to do so because of the poverty that had mingled with his light. Then he created for himself a vast eternal realm. And within that eternal realm he created six eternal realms and their adornments, six in number, that were seven times better than the heavens of chaos and their adornments. Now all these eternal realms and their adornments exist within the infinity that is between the eighth heaven and the chaos below it, being counted with the universe that belongs to poverty.

If you (sg.) want to know the arrangement of these, you will find it written in the Seventh Universe of the Prophet Hieralias.

And before Adam of Light had withdrawn in the chaos, the authorities saw him and laughed at the prime parent because he had lied when he said, "It is I who am God. No one exists before me." When they came to him, they said, "Is this not the god who ruined our work?" He answered and said, "Yes. If you do not want him to be able to ruin our work, come let us create a man (i.e., human being) out of earth, according to the image of our body and according to the likeness of this being (viz., Adam of Light), to serve us; so that when he (viz., Adam of Light) sees his likeness he might become enamored of it. No longer will he ruin our work; rather, we shall make those who are born out of the light our servants for all the duration of this eternal realm. Now all of this came to pass according to the forethought of Pistis, in order that man should appear after his likeness, and should condemn them because of their modelled form. And their modelled form became an enclosure of the light.

Then the authorities received the acquaintance (gnosis) necessary to create man. Sophia Zoe — she who is with Sabaoth — had anticipated them. And she laughed at their decision. For they are blind: against their own interests they ignorantly created him. And they do not realise what they are about to do. The reason she anticipated them and made her own man (i.e., human being) first, was in order that he might instruct their modelled form how to despise them and thus to escape from them.

Now the production of the instructor came about as follows. When Sophia let fall a droplet of light, it flowed onto the water, and immediately a human being appeared, being androgynous. That droplet she molded first as a female body. Afterwards, using the body she molded it in the likeness of the mother which had appeared. And he
finished it in twelve months. An androgynous human being was produced, whom the Greeks call Hermaphrodites; and whose mother the Hebrews call Eve of Life (Eve of Zoe), namely, the female instructor of life. Her offspring is the creature that is lord. Afterwards, the authorities called it "Beast," so that it might lead astray their modelled creatures. The interpretation of "the beast" is "the instructor." For it was found to be the wisest of all beings.

Now, Eve is the first virgin, the one who without a husband bore her first offspring. It is she who served as her own midwife. For this reason she is held to have said:

"It is I who am the part of my mother;
And it is I who am the mother;
It is I who am the wife;
It is I who am the virgin;
It is I who am pregnant;
It is I who am the midwife;
It is I who am the one that comforts pains of travail;
It is my husband who bore me;
And it is I who am his mother,
And it is he who is my father and my lord.
It is he who is my force;
What he desires, he says with reason.
I am in the process of becoming.
Yet I have borne a man as lord."

Now these through the will. The souls that were going to enter the modelled forms of the authorities were manifested to Sabaoth and his Christ. And regarding these the holy voice said, "Multiply and improve! Be lord over all creatures." And it is they who were taken captive, according to their destinies, by the prime parent. And thus they were shut into the prisons of the modelled forms. Or: at the consummation of the age. And at that time, the prime parent then rendered an opinion concerning man to those who were with him. Then each of them cast his sperm into the midst of the navel of the earth. Since that day, the seven rulers have fashioned man with his body resembling their body, but his likeness resembling the man that had appeared to them. His modelling took place by parts, one at a time. And their leader fashioned the brain and the nervous system. Afterwards he appeared as prior to him. He became a soul-endowed man. And he was called Adam, that is, "father," according to the name of the one that existed before him.
And when they had finished \(^1\) Adam, he abandoned him as an inanimate vessel, since he had taken form \(^5\) like an abortion, in that no spirit was in him. \(^1\) Regarding this thing, when the chief ruler \(^1\) remembered the saying of Pistis, he was afraid \(^1\) lest the true man enter his \(^1\) modelled form and become its lord. For this reason he \(^10\) left his modelled form forty days without \(^1\) soul, and he withdrew and abandoned it. Now on the fortieth \(^1\) day, Sophia Zoe sent \(^1\) her breath into Adam, who had no \(^1\) soul. He began to move upon the ground. \(^15\) And he could not stand up.

Then when the seven \(^1\) rulers came, they saw him and \(^1\) were greatly disturbed. They went up to \(^1\) him and seized him. And he (viz., the chief ruler) said to \(^1\) the breath within him, "Who are you? And \(^20\) whence did you come hither?" It answered \(^1\) and said, "I have come from the force \(^1\) of the man for the destruction of your work." \(^1\) (\ldots\) When they heard, they glorified him, since he \(^1\) gave them respite from the fear and the anxiety in which they found themselves. \(^25\) Then they called that day \(^1\) "Rest," in as much as they had rested \(^1\) from toil. And when they saw that Adam \(^1\) could not stand up, they were glad, and they took him \(^1\) and put him in Paradise. And they withdrew \(^30\) up to their heavens.

After \(^1\) the day of rest Sophia \(^1\) sent her daughter Zoe, being called \(^1\) Eve, as an instructor in order that she might \(^1\) make Adam, who had no soul, arise \(^35\) so that those whom he should engender might become \(^1\) containers of light. When 116 Eve saw her male counterpart prostrate she had pity \(^1\) upon him, and she said, "Adam! Become alive! \(^1\) Arise upon the earth!" Immediately her word \(^1\) became accomplished fact. For Adam, having \(^5\) arisen, suddenly opened his eyes. \(^1\) When he saw her he said, "You shall be called \(^1\) 'Mother of the Living'. For it is you who have \(^1\) given me life."

Then the authorities were informed \(^1\) that their modelled form was alive and had arisen, and they \(^10\) were greatly troubled. They sent seven archangels \(^1\) to see what had happened. They came \(^1\) to Adam. When they saw Eve talking to \(^1\) him they said to one another, "What sort of thing is this luminous woman? \(^1\) For she resembles that likeness which appeared \(^15\) to us in the light. Now come, \(^1\) let us lay hold of her and cast our \(^1\) seed into her, so that when she becomes soiled \(^1\) she may not be able to ascend into her light. \(^1\) Rather, those whom she bears will be under \(^20\) our charge. But let us not tell Adam, for he is not one \(^1\) of us. Rather let us bring a deep sleep \(^1\) over him. And let us instruct him in his \(^1\) sleep to the effect that she came from \(^1\) his rib, in order that his wife may obey, \(^25\) and he may be lord over her.'"
Then Eve, being a force, laughed at their decision. She put mist into their eyes and secretly left her likeness with Adam. She entered the tree of acquaintance and remained there. And they pursued her, and she revealed to them that she had gone into the tree and become a tree. Then, entering a great state of fear, the blind creatures fled.

Afterwards, when they had recovered from the daze, they came to Adam; and seeing the likeness of this woman with him, they were greatly disturbed, thinking it was that was the true Eve. And they acted rashly; they came up to her and seized her and cast their seed upon her. They did so wickedly, defiling not only in natural ways but also in foul ways, defiling first the seal of her voice—that had spoken with them, saying, “What is it that exists before you?”—intending to defile those who might say at the consummation (viz., of the age) that they had been born of the true man through verbal expression. And they erred, not knowing that it was their own body that they had defiled: it was the likeness that the authorities and their angels defiled in every way.

First she was pregnant with Abel, by the first ruler. And it was by the seven authorities and their angels that she bore the other offspring. And all this came to pass according to the forethought of the prime parent, so that the first mother might bear within her every seed, being mixed and being fitted to the fate of the universe and its configurations, and to Justice. A prearranged plan came into effect regarding Eve, so that the modelled forms of the authorities might become enclosures of the light, whereupon it (viz., the light) would condemn them through their modelled forms.

Now the first Adam, (Adam) of Light, is spirit-endowed, and appeared on the first day. The second Adam is soul-endowed, and appeared on the sixth day, which is called Aphrodite. The third Adam is a creature of the earth, that is, the man of the law, and he appeared on the eighth day [... the] tranquility of poverty, which is called Sunday. And the progeny of the earthly Adam became numerous and was completed, and produced within itself every kind of scientific information of the soul-endowed Adam. But all were in ignorance.

Next let me say that once the rulers had seen him and the female creature who was with him erring ignorantly like beasts, they were very glad. When they learned that the immortal man was not going to neglect them, rather that they would even have to fear the female creature that had turned into a tree, they were disturbed, and said,
Perhaps this is the true man — this being who has brought a fog upon us and has taught us that she who was soiled is like him — and so we shall be conquered!"

Then the seven of them together laid plans. They came up to Adam and Eve timidly: they said to him, "The fruit of all the trees created for you in Paradise shall be eaten; but as for the tree of acquaintance, control yourselves and do not eat from it. If you eat you will die." Having imparted great fear to them they withdrew up to their authorities.

Then came the wisest of all creatures, who was called Beast. And when he saw the likeness of their mother Eve he said to her, "What did God say to you (pl.)? Was it ‘do not eat from the tree of acquaintance (gnosis)’?" She said, "He said, ‘Not only do not eat from it, but do not touch it, lest you (sg.) die.’" He said to her, "Do not be afraid. In death you (pl.) shall not die. For he knows that when you eat from it, your intellect will become sober and you will come to be like gods, recognizing the difference that obtains between evil men and good ones. Indeed, it was in jealousy that he said this to you, so that you would not eat from it.”

Now Eve had confidence in the words of the instructor. She gazed at the tree and saw that it was beautiful and appetizing, and liked it; she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she gave some also to her husband, and he too ate it. Then their intellect became open. For when they had eaten, the light of acquaintance had shone upon them. When they clothed themselves with shame, they knew that they were naked of acquaintance. When they became sober, they saw that they were naked and became enamored of one another. When they saw that the ones who had modelled them had the form of beasts, they loathed them: they were very aware.

Then when the rulers knew that they had broken their commandments, they entered Paradise and came to Adam and Eve with earthquake and great threatening, to see the effect of the aid. Then Adam and Eve trembled greatly and hid under the trees in Paradise. Then the rulers did not know where they were and said, “Adam, where are you?” He said, “I am here, for through fear of you I hid, being ashamed.” And they said to him ignorantly, "Who told you about the shame with which you clothed yourself? — unless you have eaten from that tree!” He said, "The woman whom you gave me — it is she that gave to me and I ate.” Then they said to the latter, "What is this that you have done?” She answered and said, "It is the instructor that urged me on, and I ate.”
Then the rulers came up to the instructor. Their eyes became misty because of him, and they could not do anything to him. They cursed him, since they were powerless. Afterwards, they came up to the woman and cursed her and her offspring. After the woman, they cursed Adam, and (cursed) the land because of him, and the crops; and all things that they had created they cursed. They have no blessing. Good cannot result from evil.

From that day, the authorities knew that truly there was something mightier than they: they recognized only that their commandments had not been kept. Great jealousy was brought into the world solely because of the immortal man. Now when the rulers saw that their Adam had entered into an alien state of acquaintance they desired to test him, and they gathered together all the domestic animals and the wild beasts of the earth and the birds of heaven and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. When he saw them he gave names to their creatures.

They became troubled because Adam had recovered from all the trials. They assembled and laid plans, and they said, “Behold Adam! He has come to be like one of us, so that he knows the difference between the light and the darkness. Now perhaps he will be deceived as in the case of the tree of acquaintance and also will come to the tree of life and eat from it and become immortal and become lord and despise us and disdain [us] and all our glory. Then he will denounce [us along with our] universe. Come let us expel him from Paradise down to the land from which he was taken, so that henceforth he might not be able to recognize anything better than we can.” And so they expelled Adam from Paradise, along with his wife. And this deed that they had done was not enough for them. Rather, they were afraid. They went in to the tree of life and surrounded it with great fearful things, fiery living creatures called “Cheroubin,” and they put a flaming sword in their midst, fearfully twirling at all times, so that no earthly being might ever enter that place.

Thereupon since the rulers were envious of Adam they wanted to diminish their (viz., Adam’s and Eve’s) lifespans. They could not because of fate, which had been fixed since the beginning. For to each had been allotted a lifespan of 1,000 years according to the course of the luminous bodies. But although the rulers could not do this, each of the evil doers took away ten years. And all this lifespan (which remained) amounted to 930 years: and these are in pain and weakness and evil distraction. And so life has turned out to be, from that day until the consummation of the age.
Then when Sophia Zoe saw that the rulers of the darkness had laid a curse upon her counterparts, she was indignant. And coming out of the first heaven with full power she chased those rulers out of [their] heavens, and cast them down into the sinful [world], so that there they should dwell, in the form of evil spirits (daimones) upon the earth.

[...] so that in their world it might pass the thousand years in Paradise — a soul-endowed living creature called "phoenix." It kills itself and brings itself to life as a witness to the judgment against them, for they did wrong to Adam and his generation, unto the consummation of the age. There are three men, and also his posterities unto the consummation of the world: the spirit-endowed of eternity, and the soul-endowed, and the earthly. Likewise, the three phoenixes in Paradise — the first is immortal; the second lives 1,000 years; as for the third, it is written in the Sacred Book that it is consumed. So too there are three baptisms — the first is the spiritual, the second is by fire, the third is by water. Just as the phoenix appears as a witness concerning the angels, so the case of the water hydri in Egypt, which has been a witness to those going down into the baptism of a true man. The two bulls in Egypt possess a mystery, the sun and moon, being a witness to Sabaoth: namely, that over them Sophia received the universe; from the day that she made the sun and the moon she put a seal upon her heaven, unto eternity.

And the worm that has been born out of the phoenix is a human being as well. It is written (Ps 91:13 LXX) concerning it, "the just man will blossom like a phoenix." And the phoenix first appears in a living state, and dies, and rises again, being a sign of what has become apparent at the consummation of the age. It was only in Egypt that these great signs appeared — nowhere else — as an indication that it is like God's Paradise.

Let us return to the aforementioned rulers, so that we may offer some explanation of them. Now, when the seven rulers were cast down from their heavens onto the earth, they made for themselves angels, numerous, demonic, to serve them. And the latter instructed mankind in many kinds of error and magic and potions and worship of idols and spilling of blood and altars and temples and sacrifices and libations to all the spirits of the earth, having their coworker fate, who came into existence by the concord between the gods of injustice and justice.

And thus when the world had come into being, it distractedly erred at all times. For all men upon earth worshipped the spirits (daimo-
nes) from the creation to the consummation – both the angels of righteousness and the men of unrighteousness. Thus did the world come to exist in distraction, in ignorance, and in a stupor. They all erred, until the appearance (parousia) of the true man.

Let this suffice so far as the matter goes. Now we shall proceed to consideration of our world, so that we may accurately finish the description of its structure and management. Then it will become obvious how belief in the unseen realm, which has been apparent from creation down to the consummation of the age was discovered.

I come, therefore, to the main points [regarding] the immortal man: I shall speak of all the beings that belong to him, explaining how they happen to be here.

When a multitude of human beings had come into existence, through the parentage of [the Adam] who had been fashioned, and out of matter, and when the world had already become full, the rulers were master over it – that is, they kept it restrained by ignorance. For what reason? For the following: since the immortal father knows that a deficiency of truth came into being amongst the eternal realms and their universe, when he wished to bring to naught the rulers of perdition through the creatures they had modelled he sent your likenesses down into the world of perdition, namely, the blessed little innocent spirits. They are not alien to acquaintance. For all acquaintance is vested in one angel who appeared before them; he is not without power in the company of the father. And (he) gave them acquaintance. Whenever they appear in the world of perdition, immediately and first of all they reveal the pattern of imperishability as a condemnation of the rulers and their forces. Thus when the blessed beings appeared in forms modelled by authorities, they were envied. And out of envy the authorities mixed their seed with them, in hopes of polluting them. They could not. Then when the blessed beings appeared in luminous form, they appeared in various ways. And each one of them, starting out in his land, revealed his (kind of) acquaintance to the visible church constituted of the modelled forms of perdition. It (viz., the church) was found to contain all kinds of seed, because of the seed of the authorities that had [mixed with it].

Then the savior created... of them all – and the spirits of these [are manifestly] superior, being blessed and varying in election – and also (he created) many other beings, which have no king and are superior to everyone that was before them. Consequently, four races exist. There are three that belong to the kings of the eighth heaven. But
the fourth race is kingless and perfect, being the highest of all. For these shall enter the holy place of their father. And they will gain rest in repose and eternal, unspeakable glory and unending joy. Moreover they are kings within the mortal domain, in that they are immortal. They will condemn the gods of chaos and their forces.

Now the Word (Logos) that is superior to all beings was sent for this purpose alone: that he might proclaim the unknown. He said (Mk 4:22 par.), "There is nothing hidden that is not apparent, and what has not been recognized will be recognized." And these were sent to make known what is hidden, and the seven authorities of chaos and their impiety. And thus they were condemned to death.

So when all the perfect appeared in the forms modelled by the rulers and when they revealed the incomparable truth, they put to shame all the wisdom of the gods. And their fate was found to be a condemnation. And their force dried up. Their lordship was dissolved. Their forethought became emptiness, along with their glory.

Before the consummation of the age, the whole place will shake with great thundering. Then the rulers will be sad, their death. The angels will mourn for their mankind, and the demons will weep over their seasons, and their mankind will wail and scream at their death. Then the age will begin, and they will be disturbed. Their kings will be intoxicated with the fiery sword, and they will wage war against one another, so that the earth is intoxicated with bloodshed. And the seas will be disturbed by those wars. Then the sun will become dark. And the moon will cause its light to cease. The stars of the sky will cancel their circuits. And a great clap of thunder will come out of a great force that is above all the forces of chaos, where the firmament of the woman is situated. Having created the first product, she will put away the wise fire of intelligence and clothe herself with witless wrath. Then she will pursue the gods of chaos, whom she created along with the prime parent. She will cast them down into the abyss. They will be obliterated because of their wickedness. For they will come to be like volcanoes and consume one another until they perish at the hand of the prime parent. When he has destroyed them, he will turn against himself and destroy himself until he ceases to exist.

And their heavens will fall one upon the next and their (the rulers') forces will be consumed by fire. Their eternal realms, too, will be overturned. And his (the prime parent's) heaven will fall and break in two. His . . . will fall down upon the . . . support them; they will fall into the abyss, and the abyss will be overturned.
The light will [... the] darkness and obliterate it: it will be like something that has never been. And the product to which the darkness had been posterior will dissolve. And the deficiency will be plucked out by the root (and thrown) down into the darkness. And the light will withdraw up to its root. And the glory of the unbegotten will appear. And it will fill all the eternal realm. When the prophecy and the account of those that are king becomes known and is fulfilled by those who are called perfect, those who — in contrast — have not become perfect in the unbegotten father will receive their glory in their realms and in the kingdoms of the immortals: but they will never enter the kingless realm.

For everyone must go to the place from which he has come. Indeed, by his acts and his acquaintance each person will make his nature known.
THE EXEGESIS ON THE SOUL (II,6)

Introduced by
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The Exegesis on the Soul is a short tale (ten pages of papyrus) narrating the gnostic myth of the soul from her fall into the world to her return to heaven. The soul, whose nature is feminine — she even had a womb — was virginal and androgynous in form when she was alone with her Father in heaven, but when she fell into the world and into a body she polluted herself with many lovers. These lovers are brigands and bandits who treat the soul as a whore, then abandon her. In her suffering, she seeks for other lovers who also deceive her, making her the slave of their sexual pleasure. Ashamed, the soul remains in slavery, living in a brothel, going from one market place to another. The only gift she receives from her lovers is their polluted seed: her children are dumb, blind, sick and feebleminded.

The soul remains in this sexual and psychic captivity until the day she perceives her situation and repents. She asks help from the Father who has mercy on her. He performs two actions to help the soul: first, he makes her womb turn inward so that the soul regains her proper character: "the womb of the soul is around the outside like the male genitalia, which are external" (131,19-27). This turning inward protects the soul from further sexual contaminations by her lovers. Secondly, the Father sends a bridegroom from heaven to the soul. The bridegroom is her brother, the firstborn of the house of the Father.

Renewed and purified, the soul adorns herself in the bridal chamber waiting for the fiancé. At his arrival, they love each other passionately. Their love, which is spiritual and eternal, is described with a vivid sensuality normally used for carnal intercourse. The fruit of this marriage are good and beautiful children (i.e., in allegory, the good, virtuous ideas: cf. Philo, Cher. 44). Finally the soul regenerates herself and returns to her former state.

In its main lines, the story of the soul in Exeg. Soul follows the Valentinian myth of Sophia, the last aeon who leaves the Pleroma searching for new horizons. From prostitution to repentance in tears and from repentance to her return to the house of the Father, the itinerary of the soul closely recalls Sophia's journey.

Nevertheless, much of the originality of Exeg. Soul is to be found in the theatrical approach to the myth, now presented not in a philosophical and complex way but in a novelistic adaptation, capable of capturing the reader's attention.

Two close literatures and traditions have certainly influenced the author in the composition of his treatise: Hellenistic and Jewish romance literature. Love and
adventures are the chief ingredients of Hellenistic novels, love being the first cause of the action. These novels are governed by a single motif: the tragic separation of two lovers and their final reunion after thousands of misadventures (tricks, brigands, ambiguous figures tempting the soul's chastity; cf. the Greek novels of Achilles Tatius, Chariton, Heliodorus, Longus, and Xenophon of Ephesus).

However, two features having no connection with the Greek novel can be observed in the gnostic story: first, the heroine in *Exeg. Soul* is unique. The fiancé has little part in the narration, while in the Greek novel the primary role is always given to a couple. Second, if Greek heroines are always chaste and pure, the heroine in *Exeg. Soul* (as in other gnostic novels) has led a life of prostitution. Only later will she attain virginity.

The Jewish influence is deeper. *Exeg. Soul* is a female story, the soul in fact is presented as a woman. This is quite rare in ancient literature. We find women's stories in Jewish writings, however, especially in Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. The story of the soul from prostitution to virginity through repentance recalls the stories of Jewish sinners such as Rahab, Tamar, Ruth, and Bathsheba (cf., *Joshua*, *Jubilees*, *Testament of Judah*, *Ruth*, *2 Kings*).

*Exeg. Soul* is not the only Nag Hammadi treatise consecrated to a female figure. Comparisons exist also with *Auth. Teach*, *Thund.*, *Norea*, *Trim. Prot.*, and with other gnostic texts recounting short women's stories. Under the different names and physiognomies of all these women there is hidden one and only one personnage: soul searching for her heavenly origin. The common feature linking these female figures is the opposition “virginity-prostitution.” Rehabilitation consists in recovering original purity which is essential to attain knowledge.

In *Exeg. Soul* emphasis on pollution shows how the author was influenced by Apocryphal Judaism. This intense focus on pollution is typical of Essene psychology (cf., *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* and Qumran literature). In *Exeg. Soul* as well as in Essene spirituality, purification and repentance are the only remedies for impurity. The turning inward of the womb is to be compared with spiritual circumcision; both express the will to abandon the outside, symbol of worldly temptations.

The author of *Exeg. Soul* illustrates the myth of the soul by a series of biblical quotations and two Homeric references. These quotations are part of the narrative and strictly linked to it: they even give the writer the occasion to develop themes related to the myth of the soul. Part of these quotations are grouped together in order to point out the three stages of the soul's journey: prostitution, repentance, return to the Father. These groups of quotations were not gathered by the author but drawn from an anthology of which traces had been preserved by some Christian authors of Alexandria: Clement, Didymos arid Origen.

This helps to determine the author's milieu. He is dependent on an academic culture in which florilegia and anthologies formed an important part of an intellectual education.

The use of biblical as well as of Homeric references shows that Greek and Jewish wisdom had the same prophetical value for the author. Both of them expound the gnostic doctrine in a comprehensible way to a Christian, Jewish, or pagan public. These elements show that the gnostic author of *Exeg. Soul* was part of
a cultivated, syncretistic milieu where Jewish and Greek scriptures were well known, probably Alexandria at the beginning of the third century C.E. Even though the author borrowed traditions from Judaism and, partly, from Christianity and Paganism, nonetheless he was able to reinterpret them in the light of a new message, the gnostic one.

THE EXEGESIS ON THE SOUL

II 127, 18-137, 27

The Expository Treatise on the Soul

Wise men of old gave the soul a feminine name. Indeed she is female in her nature as well. She even has her womb.

As long as she was alone with the father, she was virgin and in form androgynous. But when she fell down into a body and came to this life, then she fell into the hands of many robbers. And the wanton creatures passed her from one to another and [ ... ] her. Some made use of her [by force], while others did so by seducing her with a gift. In short, they defiled her, and she [ ... her] virginity.

And in her body she prostituted herself and gave herself to one and all, considering each one she was about to embrace to be her husband. When she had given herself to wanton, unfaithful adulterers, so that they might make use of her, then she sighed deeply and repented. But even when she turns her face from those adulterers, she runs to others and they compel her to live with them and render service to them upon their bed, as if they were her masters. Out of shame she no longer dares to leave them, whereas they deceive her for a long time, pretending to be faithful, true husbands, as if they greatly respected her. And after all this they abandon her and go.

She then becomes a poor desolate widow, without help; not even a measure of food was left her from the time of her affliction. For from them she gained nothing except the defilements they gave her while they had sexual intercourse with her. And her offspring by the adulterers are dumb, blind, and sickly. They are feebleminded.

But when the father who is above visits her and sees her sighing — with her sufferings and disgrace and repenting of the prostitution in which she engaged, and when she begins to call upon his name so that he might help her, [ ... ] all her heart, saying, “Save me, my father, for behold I will render an ac-
count [to thee, for I abandoned] my house and 129 fled from my maiden's quarters. Restore me to thyself again." When he sees her in such a state, then he will count her worthy of his mercy upon her, for many are the afflictions that have come upon her because she abandoned her house.

Now concerning the prostitution of the soul the holy spirit prophesies in many places. For he said in the prophet Jeremiah (3:1-4),

If the husband divorces his wife and she goes and takes another man, can she return to him after that? Has not that woman utterly defiled herself? "And you (sg.) prostituted yourself to many shepherds and you returned to me!" said the lord. "Take an honest look and see where you prostituted yourself. Were you not sitting in the streets defiling the land with your acts of prostitution and your vices? And you took many shepherds for a stumbling block for yourself. You became shameless with everyone. You did not call on me as kinsman or as father or author of your virginity."

Again it is written in the prophet Hosea (2:2-7),

Come, go to law with your (pl.) mother, for she is not to be a wife to me nor I a husband to her. I shall remove her prostitution from my presence, and I shall remove her adultery from between her breasts. I shall make her naked as on the day she was born, and I shall make her desolate like a land without [water], and I shall make her [longingly] childless. [I] shall show her children no pity, for they are children of prostitution, since their mother prostituted herself and [put her children to shame].

For she said, "I shall prostitute myself to my lovers. It was they who gave me my bread and my water and my garments and my clothes and my wine and my oil and everything I needed."

Therefore behold I shall shut them up so that she shall not be able to run after her adulterers. And when she seeks them and does not find them, she will say, "I shall return to my former husband, for in those days I was better off than now."

Again he said in Ezekiel (16:23-26),

It came to pass after much depravity, said the lord, you built yourself a brothel and you made yourself a beautiful place in the streets. And you built yourself brothels on every lane, and you wasted your beauty, and you spread your legs in every alley, and you multiplied your acts of prostitution. You prostituted yourself to the sons of Egypt, those who are your neighbors, men great of flesh.
But what does "the sons of Egypt, men great of flesh" mean if not the domain of the flesh and the perceptible realm and the affairs of the earth, by which the soul has become defiled here, receiving bread from them, as well as wine, oil, clothing, and the other external nonsense surrounding the body — the things she thinks she needs.

But as to this prostitution the apostles of the savior commanded (cf. Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Th 4:3; 1 Co 6:18; 2 Co 7:1),

Guard yourselves against it, purify yourselves from it, speaking not just of the prostitution of the body but especially of that of the soul. For this reason the apostles [write to the churches] of God, that such [prostitution] might not occur among [us].

Yet the greatest [struggle] has to do with the prostitution of the soul. From it arises the prostitution of the body as well. Therefore Paul, writing to the Corinthians (1 Co 5:9-10), said,

I wrote you in the letter, "Do not associate with prostitutes," not at all (meaning) the prostitutes of this world or the greedy or the thieves or the idolators, since then you would have to go out from the world.

here it is speaking spiritually —

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood — as he said (Ep 6:12) — but against the world rulers of this darkness and the spirits of wickedness.

As long as the soul keeps running about everywhere copulating with whomever she meets and defiling herself, she exists suffering her just deserts. But when she perceives the straits she is in and weeps before the father and repents, then the father will have mercy on her and he will make her womb turn from the external domain and will turn it again inward, so that the soul will regain her proper character. For it is not so with a woman. For the womb of the body is inside the body like the other internal organs, but the womb of the soul is around the outside like the male genitalia, which are external.

So when the womb of the soul, by the will of the father, turns itself inward, it is baptized and is immediately cleansed of the external pollution which was pressed upon it, just as [garments, when] dirty, are put into the [water and] turned about until their dirt is removed and they become clean. And so the cleansing of the soul is to regain the [newness] of her former nature and to turn herself back again. That is her baptism.

Then she will begin to rage at herself like a woman in labor, who writhes and rages in the hour of delivery. But since she is female, by
herself she is powerless to beget a child. From heaven the father sent her her man, who is her brother, the firstborn. Then the bridegroom came down to the bride. She gave up her former prostitution and cleansed herself of the pollutions of the adulterers, and she was renewed so as to be a bride. She cleansed herself in the bridal chamber; she filled it with perfume; she sat in it waiting for the true bridegroom. No longer does she run about the market place, copulating with whomever she desires, but she continued to wait for him — (saying) "When will he come?" — and to fear him, for she did not know what he looked like; she no longer remembers since the time she fell from her father's house. But by the will of the father (...) And she dreamed of him like a woman in love with a man.

But then the bridegroom, according to the father's will, came down to her into the bridal chamber, which was prepared. And he decorated the bridal chamber. For since that marriage is not like the carnal marriage, those who are to have intercourse with one another will be satisfied with that intercourse. And as if it were a burden they leave behind them the annoyance of physical desire and they [turn their faces from] each other. But this marriage... But [once] they unite with one another, they become a single life. Wherefore the prophet said (Gn 2:24) concerning the first man and the first woman, They will become a single flesh. For they were originally joined to one another when they were with the father before the woman led astray the man, who is her brother. This marriage has brought them back together again and the soul has been joined to her true love, her real master, as it is written (cf. Gn 3:16; Co 11:1; Ep 5:23),

For the master of the woman is her husband.

Then gradually she recognized him, and she rejoiced once more, weeping before him as she remembered the disgrace of her former widowhood. And she adorned herself still more so that he might be pleased to stay with her.

And the prophet said in the Psalms (45:10-11),

Hear, my daughter, and see and incline your ear and forget your people and your father's house, for the king has desired your beauty, for he is your lord.

For he requires her to turn her face from her people and the multitude of her adulterers, in whose midst she once was, to devote herself only to her king, her real lord, and to forget the house of the earthly
father, with whom things went badly for her, but to remember her father who is in heaven. Thus also it was said (Gn 12:1) to Abraham,

Come out from your country and your kinsfolk and from your father’s house.

Thus when the soul adorned herself again in her beauty [... ] enjoyed her beloved, and [he also] loved her. And when she had intercourse with him, she got 134 from him the seed that is the life-giving spirit, so that by him she bears good children and rears them. For this is the great, perfect marvel of birth. And so this marriage is made perfect by the will of the father.

Now it is fitting that the soul regenerate herself and become again as she formerly was. The soul then moves of her own accord. And she received the divine nature from the father for her rejuvenation, so that she might be restored to the place where originally she had been. This is the resurrection that is from the dead. This is the ransom from captivity. This is the upward journey of ascent to heaven. This is the way of ascent to the father. Therefore the prophet said (Ps 103:1-5),

Praise the lord, O my soul, and, all that is within me, (praise) his holy name. My soul, praise God, who forgave all your sins, who healed all your sicknesses, who ransomed your life from death, who crowned you with mercy, who satisfies your longing with good things. Your youth will be renewed like an eagle’s.

Then when she becomes young again she will ascend, praising the father and her brother, by whom she was rescued. Thus it is by being born again that the soul will be saved. And this is due not to rote phrases or to professional skills or to book learning. Rather it is the grace of the [... , it is] the gift of the [...]. For such is this heavenly thing. Therefore the savior cries out (Jn 6:44),

Blessed are those who mourn, for it is they who will be pitied; blessed, those who are hungry, for it is they who will be filled.
Again he said (cf. Lk 14:26),

If 20 one does not hate his soul he cannot follow 1 me.

For the beginning of salvation is 1 repentance. Therefore (cf. Acts 13:24),

Before 1 Christ’s appearance came John, 1 preaching the baptism of repentance. 25

And repentance takes place in distress 1 and grief. But the father is good and loves 1 humanity, and he hears the 1 soul that calls upon him and 1 sends it the light of salvation. Therefore 30 he said through the spirit to the 1 prophet (cf. 1 Cl 8:3),

Say to the children of my people, 1 “[If your] sins extend 1 [from earth to] heaven, and if they become 1 [red] like scarlet and 35 blacker than [sackcloth and if] 136 you return to me with all your 1 soul and say to me, 1 “My father,” I will heed you as a 1 holy people.’”

Again another place (Is 30:15),

Thus says 5 the lord, the holy one of 1 Israel: “If you (sg.) return and sigh, 1 then you will be saved and will know where you were 1 when you trusted in what is empty.”

Again 1 he said in another place (Is 30:19-20),

Jerusalem wept 10 much, saying, “Have pity on me.” He will have pity on the sound 1 of your (sg.) weeping. And when he saw he heeded you. 1 And the lord will give you (pl.) bread of 1 affliction and water of oppression. 1 From now on those who deceive will not approach you (sg.) again. 15 Your eyes will see those who are deceiving 1 you.

Therefore it is fitting to pray to 1 God night and day, spreading out 1 our hands towards him as do people sailing in the middle 1 of the sea: they pray to God 20 with all their heart without hypocrisy. 1 For those who pray 1 hypocritically deceive only themselves. 1 Indeed, it is in order that he might know who is worthy of salvation 1 that God examines the inward parts and 25 searches the bottom of the heart. For no 1 one is worthy of salvation who still loves 1 the place of deception.

Therefore it is written 1 in the poet (Homer, Odyssey 1.48-59),

Odysseus sat 1 on the island weeping and grieving and turning 30 his face from the words of Calypso 1 and from her tricks, longing to see 1 his village and smoke coming 1 forth from it. And had he not [received] 1 help from heaven, [he would] not [have been able to return] 35 to his village.

Again [Helen] 〈...〉 saying (Odyssey 4.260-261), 1
[My heart] turned itself from me. 137 It is to my house that I want to return.

For she sighed, 1 saying (Odyssey 4.261-264),

It is Aphrodite who 1 deceived me and brought me out of my village. My only daughter 1 I left behind me, and my 5 good, understanding, handsome husband.

For when 1 the soul leaves her 1 perfect husband because of the treachery of Aphrodite, 1 who exists here in the act of begetting, then 1 she will suffer harm. But if she sighs 10 and repents, she will be restored to her 1 house.

Certainly Israel would not have been visited 1 in the first place, to be brought out of the land of Egypt, 1 out of the house of bondage, if it had not sighed 1 to God and wept for the oppression 15 of its labors. Again it is written in the Psalms (6:6-9), 1

I was greatly troubled in my groaning. I will 1 bathe my bed and my cover each 1 night with my tears. I have become old in the midst of all my enemies. 1 Depart from me, all 20 you who work at lawlessness, for behold the 1 lord has heard the cry of my weeping and the lord has heard my prayer.’’

If 1 we repent, truly God will 1 heed us, he who is long suffering and abundantly 25 merciful, to whom is the glory for 1 ever and ever. Amen. 1

The Expository Treatise on the Soul
THE BOOK OF THOMAS THE CONTENDER (II,7)

Introduced and translated by

JOHN D. TURNER

_The Book of Thomas the Contender_ is the seventh and last treatise in Codex II of the Coptic Gnostic library from Nag Hammadi. It is a revelation dialogue between the resurrected Jesus and his twin brother Judas Thomas, ostensibly recorded by Mathaias (the apostle Matthew?) at a time just before Jesus' ascension. It is a literary expression of traditions native to Syrian Edessa about the apostle Jude, surnamed Thomas, the missionary to India. It was likely composed in the first half of the third century C.E. Two products of this tradition have been dated with fair certainty: _The Gospel of Thomas_, composed ca. C.E. 50-125, and the _Acts of Thomas_, composed ca. C.E. 225. Both seem to derive from the ascetic, pre-Manichaean Christianity in the Osrhoène (eastern Syria, between Edessa [modern Urfu] and Messene). _The Book of Thomas the Contender_ seems to occupy a median position between the _Gos. Thom._ and the _Acts_ in 1) date of composition, 2) relative dominance of the role played by Thomas in these works, and 3) in developing from a sayings collection preserved by Thomas ( _Gos. Thom._ ) to a dialogue between Jesus and Thomas ( _Thom. Cont._ ), to a full-blown romance centered on the missionary exploits of Thomas ( _Acts of Thomas._ ). The present Coptic version was probably translated from Greek; the existence of the text is otherwise unattested in antiquity.

The subscripted title designates the work as a "book" of "Thomas the athletes" (i.e., "one who struggles" against the fiery passions of the body) writing to the perfect, while the opening lines designate the work as "secret sayings" spoken by Jesus to Judas Thomas and recorded by Mathaias as he heard them speaking. The designation "sayings" does not really correspond to the genre of the work, which is a revelation dialogue. This type of dialogue is unlike the Platonic dialogue in which a conversational process of statement, counterstatement, and clarification leads step by step to the birth of knowledge. It is instead more related to the literature sometimes called _eratapokriseis_ ("questions and answers"), in which an initiate elicits revealed truth from a spiritual authority in the form of catachetical answers to topical questions. Such revelation dialogues are found in many pagan Hermetic and gnostic Christian texts, including many from Nag Hammadi ( _Ap. John, Soph. Jes. Chr., Dis. 8-9, Dial. Sav., Ep. Pet. Phil._ ). These dialogues are set at a time between the resurrection and ascension, when the Savior appeared on earth in his true divine form, so that both he and his teaching were available to select apostles in a form unclouded by the sort of materiality which was believed to obscure the spiritual significance of his rather parabolic earthly, preresurrection teaching. This special teaching might consist of enlightening commentary on his darker earthly teaching, or even new revelations to special apostles. As the Savior's twin, Thomas had a claim to direct insight into the nature of the Savior and his teaching. By "knowing himself," Thomas
would also know the "depth of the all," whence the Savior came, and whither he was about to return, and thus become a missionary possessing the true teaching of Jesus.

This true teaching of Jesus turns out to be consistently ascetic. Its basic theme or catchword is "fire," the fire of bodily passions that torment the soul, and its counterpart in the flames of hell: one shall be punished by that by which one sins. Around this principal theme are gathered a number of conceptual oppositions. It is of course the presence of the Savior as the emissary of the light which serves to illumine the eyes to see invisible reality within that which heretofore was only perceptually visible and thus illusory. The treatise thus evinces a Platonic dualism of a radically ascetic stripe, and may be properly considered broadly ascetic rather than gnostic. The gnostic myth of the creation of the world by a divine accident or evil power is neither mentioned nor apparently presupposed, and the dualism of the treatise is much more anthropological (body/soul) than cosmic (the above/below). A more appropriate designation for the doctrine of this work is Christian(ized) wisdom with ascetic application: the wisdom themes of seeking, finding, being troubled, resting, and ruling (cf. Gospel of Thomas, saying 2, etc.) are distinctly present and pressed into the service of an exhortation to the ascetic life by means of a Platonic dualism between the visible-passional-illusory and the invisible-spiritual-real.

There are presently two competing theories concerning the composition of The Book of Thomas the Contender. The more recent one, developed by H.M. Schenke, holds that its underlying source lay in a probably non-Christian Hellenistic Jewish wisdom treatise. Subsequently, in the Christian orbit, this ascetic treatise was Christianized by the substitution of Jesus for the figure of divine wisdom as the revelatory figure of the work, by the addition to the title of the phrase "The Book of Thomas," and by the attendant recasting of the whole from the genre of expository treatise into the genre of revelation dialogue. That is, the text was dissected into smaller expository sections placed upon the lips of the risen Jesus; these were recast as answers to fictitious questions put to him by the apostle Thomas, which themselves were inserted into the text as pretexts for the ensuing answers of the Savior.

The earlier theory, developed by the author of this article, began with the observation that the actual dialogue between Thomas and Jesus occupies only the first three fifths of the treatise (138,4-142,21), while the remaining two fifths (142,21-end) actually constitute a long monologue of the Savior, in which Thomas no longer plays a role. This and the detection of a transitional editorial seam at 142,21 suggest that The Book of Thomas the Contender could have been compiled by a redactor from two separate works, the first three fifths from a dialogue between Thomas and Jesus, perhaps entitled "The Book of Thomas the Contender writing to the Perfect," and the second two fifths from a collection of the sayings of the Savior gathered into a homiletical discourse perhaps entitled "The hidden words which the Savior spoke, which I recorded, even I, Mathaias." A redactor later prefixed the dialogue to the sayings collection, prefaced the whole with the present opening lines, augmented by the reference to Thomas as the recipient of the secret words and Mathaias as the scribe, but then appended a subscript title designating Thomas as the author of the whole.

While a final decision between these two compositional theories is still wait-
ed, there can be no question that *The Book of Thomas the Contender* displays the marks of a redactional history. On either view, it represents a new source for the critical investigation of early Christian literature and for the process by which ever new literary genres were adapted for Christian teaching. It also constitutes another instance in a growing body of Christian wisdom literature, with its emphasis on seeking, finding, resting on, and ruling by the truth, and thus escaping the troubles of life.

THE BOOK OF THOMAS THE CONTENDER

II 138, 1-145, 19
145, 20-23

The secret words that the savior spoke to Judas Thomas which I, even I Mathaias, wrote down, while I was walking, listening to them speak with one another.

The savior said, "Brother Thomas, while you have time in the world, listen to me, and I will reveal to you the things you have pondered in your mind.

"Now since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself and learn who you are, in what way you exist, and how you will come to be. Since you will be called my brother, it is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself. And I know that you have understood, because you had already understood that I am the knowledge of the truth. So while you accompany me, although you are uncomprehending, you have (in fact) already come to know, and you will be called 'the one who knows himself.' For he who has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved knowledge about the depth of the all. So then, you, my brother Thomas, have beheld what is obscure to men, that is, what they ignorantly stumble against."

Now Thomas said to the lord, "Therefore I beg you to tell me what I ask you before your ascension, and when I hear from you about the hidden things, then I can speak about them. And it is obvious to me that the truth is difficult to perform before men."

The savior answered, saying, "If the things that are visible to you (pl.) are obscure to you, how can you hear about the things that are not visible? If the deeds of the truth that are visible in the world are difficult for you (pl.) to perform, how indeed, then, shall you perform those that pertain to the exalted height and to the pleroma which are not visible? And how shall you be called 'laborers'? In this respect-
you are apprentices, and have not yet received the height of perfection."

Now Thomas answered and said to the savior, "Tell us about these things that you say are not visible, but are hidden from us."

The savior said, "[All] bodies the beasts are begotten . . . . it is evident like . . . . [ . . . ] . . . . this, too, those that are above things that are visible, but [they are] visible 139 in their own root, and it is their fruit that nourishes them. But these visible bodies survive by devouring creatures similar to them with the result that the bodies change. Now that which changes will decay and perish, and has no hope of life from then on, since that body is bestial. So just as the body of the beasts perishes, so also will these formations perish. Do they not derive from intercourse like that of the beasts? If it, (the body) too derives from intercourse, how will it beget anything different from beasts? So, therefore, you are babes until you become perfect."

And Thomas answered, "Therefore I say to you, lord, that those who speak about things that are invisible and difficult to explain are like those who shoot their arrows at a target at night. To be sure, they shoot their arrows as anyone would — since they shoot at the target — but it is not visible. Yet when the light comes forth and hides the darkness, then the work of each will appear. And you, our light, enlighten, O lord."

Jesus said, "It is in light that light exists."

Thomas spoke, saying, "Lord, why does this visible light that shines on behalf of men rise and set?"

The savior said, "O blessed Thomas, of course this visible light shines on your (pl.) behalf — not in order that you (pl.) remain here, but rather that you might come forth — and whenever all the elect abandon bestiality, then this light will withdraw up to its essence, and its essence will welcome it, since it is a good servant."

Then the savior continued and said, "O unsearchable love of the light! O bitterness of the fire that blazes in the bodies of men and in their marrow, kindling in them night and day, and burning the limbs of men and [making] their minds become drunk and their souls become deranged them within males and females . . . . [ . . . ] night and moving them, [ . . . ] . . . . secretly and visibly. For the males [move . . . upon the females] and the females upon [the males. Therefore it is] 140 said, 'Everyone who seeks the truth from true wisdom will make himself wings so as to fly, fleeing the lust that scorches the
spirits of men.’ And he will make himself wings to flee every visible spirit.’"

And Thomas answered, saying, ‘Lord, this is exactly what I am asking you about, since I have understood that you are the one who is beneficial to us, as you say.’

Again the savior answered and said, ‘Therefore it is necessary for us to speak to you (pl.), since this is the doctrine for the perfect. If, now, you (pl.) desire to become perfect, you shall observe these things; if not, your (pl.) name is ‘Ignorant,’ since it is impossible for an intelligent man to dwell with a fool, for the intelligent man is perfect in all wisdom. To the fool, however, the good and bad are the same — indeed the wise man will be nourished by the truth and (Ps 1:3) ‘will be like a tree growing by the meandering stream’ — seeing that there are some who, although having wings, rush upon the visible things, things that are far from the truth. For that which guides them, the fire, will give them an illusion of truth, [and] will shine on them with a [perishable] beauty, and it will imprison them in a dark sweetness and captivate them with fragrant pleasure. And it will blind them with insatiable lust and burn their souls and become for them like a stake stuck in their heart which they can never dislodge. And like a bit in the mouth it leads them according to its own desire.

‘And it has fettered them with its chains and bound all their limbs with the bitterness of the bondage of lust for those visible things that will decay and change and swerve by impulse. They have always been attracted downwards; as they are killed, they are assimilated to all the beasts of the perishable realm.’

Thomas answered and said, ‘It is obvious and has been said, ‘[Many are ... those who do not know ... 40 soul.’”

And [the savior] answered, saying, ‘[Blessed is] the wise man who sought after the truth, and when he found it, he rested upon it forever and was unafraid of those who wanted to disturb him.’

Thomas answered and said, ‘Is it beneficial for us, lord, to rest among our own?’

The savior said, ‘Yes, it is useful. And it is good for you (pl.) since things visible among men will dissolve — for the vessel of their flesh will dissolve, and when it is brought to naught it will come to be among visible things, among things that are seen. And then the fire which they see gives them pain on account of love for the faith they formerly possessed. They will be gathered back to that which is visible. Moreover, those who have sight among things that are not vis-
ible, without the first love they will perish in the concern for this life and the scorching of the fire. Only a little while longer, and that which is visible will dissolve; then shapeless shades will emerge and in the midst of tombs they will forever dwell upon the corpses in pain and corruption of soul.”

Thomas answered and said, “What have we to say in the face of these things? What shall we say to blind men? What doctrine should we express to these miserable mortals who say, ‘We came to do good and not to curse,’ and yet ‘Had we not been begotten in the flesh, we would not have known iniquity’?”

The savior said, “Truly, as for those, do not esteem them as men, but regard them as beasts, for just as beasts devour one another, so also men of this sort devour one another. On the contrary, they are deprived of the kingdom since they love the sweetness of the fire and are servants of death and rush to the works of corruption. They fulfill the lust of their fathers. They will be thrown down to the abyss and be afflicted by the torment of the bitterness of their evil nature. For they will be scourged so as to make them rush backwards, whither they do not know, but with despair. And they rejoice over madness and derangement... [They] pursue [this] derangement without realizing [their madness, thinking] that they [are] wise. [They... their body... Their mind is directed to their own selves, for their thought is occupied with their deeds. But it is the fire that will burn them!”

And Thomas answered and said, “Lord, what will the one thrown down to them do? For I am most anxious about them; many are those who fight them.”

The savior answered and said, ‘What is your own opinion?’

Judas – the one called Thomas – said, “It is you, lord, whom it befits to speak, and me to listen.”

The savior replied, “Listen to what I am going to tell you (sg.) and believe in the truth. That which sows and that which is sown will dissolve in their fire – within the fire and the water – and they will hide in tombs of darkness. And after a long time they shall show forth the fruit of the evil trees, being punished, being slain in the mouth of beasts and men at the instigation of the rains and winds and air and the light that shines above.”

Thomas replied, “You have certainly persuaded us, lord. We realize in our heart, and it is obvious, that this [is so], and that your
word is sufficient. But these words 1 that you speak to us are ridiculous and contemptible to the world 1 since they are misunderstood. 1 So how can we go 25 preach them, since we are not esteemed 1 in the world?"

The savior answered and said, 1 "Truly I tell you (pl.) that he who will listen to 1 your word and turn away his face or sneer 1 at it or smirk at these things, truly 30 I tell you that he will be handed over to 1 the ruler above who rules over 1 all the powers as their king, and he will turn 1 that one around and cast him from heaven down to 1 the abyss, and he will be imprisoned in a narrow 35 dark place. Moreover, he can neither turn nor move on account of 1 the great depth of Tartaros and the [heavy bitterness] 1 of Hades that is steadfast [...] 1 [...] them to it [...] 1 [...] they will not forgive [...] 40 [...] pursue you (pl.). They will hand [...] 1 over [to...] angel Tartarouchos [...] 1 fire pursuing them 143 [...] fiery scourges that cast a shower of sparks into 1 the face of the one who is pursued. If he flees westward, he 1 finds the fire. If he turns southward, he finds it there as well. 1 If he turns northward, the threat 5 of seething fire meets him again. Nor does he find the way to the east 1 so as to flee there and be saved, for he did not find it in the day 1 he was in the body, so that he might find it in the day of judgment."

Then the savior continued, saying, 1 "Woe to you, godless ones, who have no hope, 10 who rely on things that will not happen!

"Woe to you (pl.) 1 who hope in the flesh and in the prison that will perish! 1 How long will you be oblivious? And how long will you suppose that the imperishables 1 will perish too? Your hope is set 1 upon the world, and your god is this life! 15 You are corrupting your souls!

"Woe to you (pl.) within 1 the fire that burns in you, for it is insatiable! 1

"Woe to you because of the wheel that turns in 1 your minds!

"Woe to you within the grip of the burning 1 that is in you, for it will devour your flesh openly 20 and rend your souls secretly, 1 and prepare you for your companions!

"Woe to 1 you, captives, for you are bound in caverns! 1 You laugh! In mad laughter you rejoice! 1 You neither realize your perdition, nor 25 do you reflect on your circumstances, nor have [you] 1 understood that you dwell in darkness and [death]! 1 On the contrary, you are drunk with the fire and [full] 1 of bitterness. Your mind is deranged on account of the [burning 1 that is in] you, and sweet to you are the poison and 30 the blows of your enemies! And the darkness rose for 1 you like the light, for you surrendered your freedom 1 for servitude! You darkened your hearts 1 and surrendered your thoughts 1 to folly, and you
filled your thoughts with the smoke of the fire that is in you! And your light has hidden in the cloud and the garment that is put upon you, you [...]. And [you] were seized by the hope that does not exist. And whom is it [you have] believed? Do you [not know that you] all dwell among those who that [...]. 144 You baptized your souls in the water of darkness!

"Woe to you (pl.) who dwell in error, heedless that the light of the sun which judges and looks down upon the all will circle around all things so as to enslave the enemies. You do not even notice the moon, how by night and day it looks down, looking at the bodies of your slaughters!

"Woe to you (pl.) who love intimacy with womankind and polluted intercourse with them!

"Woe to you (pl.) in the grip of the powers of your body, for they will afflict you!

"Woe to you (pl.) in the grip of the forces of the evil demons!

"Woe to you (pl.) who beguile your limbs with fire! Who is it that will rain a refreshing dew on you to extinguish the mass of fire from you along with your burning? Who is it that will cause the sun to shine upon you to disperse the darkness in you and hide the darkness and polluted water?

"The sun and the moon will give a fragrance to you (pl.), together with the air and the spirit and the earth and the water. For if the sun does not shine upon these bodies, they will wither and perish just like weeds or grass. If the sun shines on them, they prevail and choke the grapevine; but if the grapevine prevails and shades those weeds and all that other brush growing alongside and [spreads] and flourishes, it alone inherits the land in which it grows; and every place it has shaded it dominates. And when it grows up, it dominates all the land and is bountiful for its master, and it pleases him even more, for he would have suffered great pains on account of these plants until he uprooted them. But the grapevine alone removed them and choked them, and they died and became like the soil."

Then Jesus continued and said to them, "Woe to you (pl.), for you did not receive the doctrine, and those who are will labor at preaching. And [you] are rushing into [...]. 145 And [you] kill them daily in order that they might rise from death.

"Blessed are you (pl.) who have prior knowledge of the stumbling blocks and who flee alien things."
“Blessed are you (pl.) who are reviled and not esteemed on account of the love their lord has for them.

“Blessed are you (pl.) who weep and are oppressed by those without hope, for you will be released from every bondage.

“Watch and pray that you (pl.) not come to be in the flesh, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life. And as you pray, you will find rest, for you have left behind the suffering and the disgrace. For when you come forth from the sufferings and passions of the body, you will receive rest from the good one, and you will reign with the king, you joined with him and he with you, from now on, for ever and ever. Amen.”

The Book of Thomas
The Contender Writing
To the Perfect (pl.).

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Remember me also, my brethren, in your prayers:
Peace to the saints and those who are spiritual.
THE GOSPEL OF THE EGYPTIANS (III,2 AND IV,2)

Introduced and translated by
ALEXANDER BÖHLIG and FREDERIK WISSE

The so-called Gospel of the Egyptians is preserved in two Coptic versions which were translated independently from the Greek. It is not related to the apocryphal Gospel of the Egyptians which is cited in Patristic literature. The tractate, which is also entitled “The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit,” is an esoteric writing representing a Sethian type of mythological Gnosticism. It may be described as a work which presents a gnostic salvation history. Since the mythological, heavenly Seth is portrayed as the father of the gnostic race, it is appropriate that the tractate lists him as the author of this divinely inspired book.

The tractate is divisible into four main sections. The first section (III 40,12-55,16 = IV 50,1-67,1) deals with the origin of the heavenly world: from the supreme God, dwelling in solitary height as the transcendent Great Invisible Spirit, there evolves and emanates a series of glorious beings, from the mighty trinity of Father, Mother Barbelo, and Son, through the pleroma of heavenly powers, to Adamas’ great son Seth, the father and savior of the incorruptible race. The second section (III 55,16-66,8 = IV 67,2-78,10) discusses the origin, preservation, and salvation of the race of Seth: because of the arrogance and hostility of Saklas and the Archons, Seth comes from heaven, puts on Jesus as a garment, and accomplishes a work of salvation on behalf of his children. The third section (III 66,8-67,26 = IV 78,10-80,15) is hymnic in character; and the fourth section (III 68,1-69,17 = IV 80,15-81,end) contains a concluding account of the Sethian origin and transmission of the tractate.

Thus, in a manner analogous to that in which the New Testament gospels proclaim the life of Jesus, The Gospel of the Egyptians presents the life of Seth. His pre-history, the origin of his seed, the preservation of his seed by the heavenly powers, the coming of Seth into the world, and his work of salvation, especially through baptism, are proclaimed with drama and praise.

The following translation is based primarily on the text of Codex III; the more fragmentary (though probably more reliable) text of Codex IV has been utilized for the missing pages 45-48, and when the text of III,2 appears to be corrupted.
The [holy] book [of the Egyptians] about the great invisible [Spirit, the] Father whose name cannot be uttered, [he who came] forth from the heights of [the perfection, the] light of the [aeons of light], the light of the [silence of the] providence of the Father of the silence, the [light] of the word and the truth, the light [of the incorruptions, the] infinite light, [the] radiance from the aeons of light of the unrevealable, unmarked, ageless, unproclaimable Father, the aeon of the aeons, Autogenes, self-begotten, self-producing, alien, the really true aeon.

Three powers came forth from him; they are the Father, the Mother, (and) the Son, from the living silence, what came forth from the incorruptible Father. These came forth from the silence of the unknown Father.

[And] from that place Domedon Doxomedon came forth, the aeon of the aeons and the light of each one of their powers. [And] thus the Son came forth fourth; the Mother [fifth; the Father] sixth. He was but unheralded; [it is he] who is unmarked among all [the powers], the glories, and the incorruptions.

From that place the three powers [came forth, the three ogdoads that the Father brings forth, in silence with his providence, from his bosom, i.e. the Father, the Mother, (and) the Son.]

The second ogdoad-power, the Mother, the virginal Barbelon epititioch[, ...] ai, memeneaimen[, ... who] presides over the heaven, karb[, ...] the uninterpretable power, the ineffable Mother. [She originated] from herself [, ...]; she came forth; [she] agreed with the Father of the silent [silence].

The third ogdoad-power, the Son of the silent silence, and the crown of the silent silence, [and] the glory of the Father, and the virtue [of the Mother. He] brings forth from the bosom the seven powers of the great light of the seven voices, and the word [is] their completion.
These are the three powers, the three ogdoads that the Father through his providence brought forth from his bosom. He brought them forth at that place.

Domedon Doxomedon came forth, the aeon of the aeons, and the throne which is in him, and the powers which surround him, the glories and the incorruptions. The Father of the great light who came forth from the silence, he is the great Doxomedon-aeon in which the thrice-male child rests. And the throne of his glory was established in it, this one on which his unvealable name is inscribed, on the tablet one is the word, the Father of the great, invisible, unnameable, virginal, uncalleable Spirit, and his male virgin. They asked for a power. A silence of living silence came forth, namely glories and incorruptions in the aeons... aeons... myriads added on... the three males, [the three] male offspring, the [male] races (IV 55, 5-7 adds: the glories of the Father, the glories of the great Christ and the male offspring, the [races]) filled the great Doxomedon-aeon with the power of the word of the whole pleroma.

Then the thrice-male child of the great Christ whom the great invisible Spirit had anointed — he whose power was called Ainon, gave praise to the great invisible Spirit [and his] male virgin Yoel, [and] the silence of silent silence, and the greatness IV 55 that... ineffable... ineffable... ineffable... ineffable... unanswerable and uninterpretable, the first one who has come forth, and (who is unproclaimable, 56 which is wonderful... ineffable... he who has all the greatnesses of greatness] the silence at that place. The thrice-male child brought praise and asked for a power from the great, invisible, virginal Spirit.

Then there appeared at that place who who... who sees glories... treasures in a... invisible... mysteries to... of the silence... who is the male] virgin [Youel].

Then the child of the child Esephech appeared. And thus he was completed, namely, the [Father, the] Mother, the
[Son], 25 the [five] seals, the 1 unconquerable power which [is] 1 the great [Christ] of all the incorruptible 57 ones. [...] 1 holy [...] 1 the end, [the] incorruptible [...] 1 and [...], 5 they are powers [and glories 1 and] incorruptions [...] 1 they came forth [...]. 13 This one brought [praise] 1 to the unrevealable, 15 hidden [mystery ...] 1 the] hidden [...] 21 him in the [...] and] the aeons [...] thrones, [...] and each one [...] 25 myriads of [powers] 1 without number surround [them, 58 glories] and 1 incorruptions [...] and they [...] of the Father, [...] and the [Mother, and] the Son, and 5 [the] whole [pleroma] which I [mentioned] 1 before, [and the] five seals 1 and the mystery] of 1 [mysteries]. They [appeared ... 13 who] presides [over ...] and the aeons [of 15 ... really] 1 truly [...] and the [...] 18 eternal [...] 21 and the 1 [really] truly [eternal] aeons.

Then [providence came forth 1 from silence], and the [living silence 25 of] the Spirit, [and] 1 the Word [of] the Father, and [a] 1 light. [She ... the five] 59 seals which [the Father brought] 1 forth from his bosom, and she passed [through] 1 all the aeons which I mentioned 1 before. And she established 5 thrones of glory [and myriads] 1 of angels [without] number 1 [who] surrounded them, [powers 1 and incorruptible] glories, who 1 [sing] and give glory, all giving 10 praise with [a single voice], 1 with one accord, [with 1 one] never-silent [voice ... 1 to] the Father, and the [Mother, 1 and the] Son [... and 15 all the] pleromas [that I] 1 mentioned [before], who is [the 1 great] Christ, who is from [silence, 1 who] is the [incorruptible] child 1 Telmael Telmachael 20 [Eli Eli] Machar Machar 1 [Seth, the] power which really truly lives, 1 [and the] male 1 [virgin] who is with [him], Youel, 1 [and] Esephech, [the] holder of glory, 25 the [child] of the child 1 [and the crown of] his glory 1 [...] of the five 1 seals, [the] pleroma [that 1 I mentioned before].

There 60 the great self-begotten 1 living [Word came forth, 1 the] true [god], the 1 unborn physis, he whose 5 name I shall tell, saying, 1 [...]aia[...]thaōthōsth[...] 1 who [is the] son of the [great] 1 Christ, who is the son [of 1 the] ineffable silence, [who] 10 came forth from the great [invisible] 1 and incorruptible [Spirit]. 1 The [son] of the silence and [silence] 1 appeared [...] 15 invisible 1 man 1 and the] treasures [of] his glory. [Then] 1 he appeared in the revealed [...]. 1 And he [established] 20 the four [aeons]. 1 With a word [he] established 1 them.

He brought [praise] 1 to the great, [invisible], 1 virginal Spirit, [the silence] 25 of the [Father] in a silence [of the] 1 living silence [of silence, 1 the] place where the man rests. 1 [...] 1 through [...]. 30
Then there came forth [at (or: from)] III 49 that [place] the cloud [of the] great light, the living power, the mother of the holy, incorruptible ones, the great power, the Mirothoe. And she gave birth to him whose name I name, saying, ien ien ea ea ea, three times. IV 61

For this one, [Adamas], is [a light] which radiated [from the light; he is] the eye of the [light]. For [this is] the first man, III 49 he through whom and to whom everything became, (and) without whom nothing became. The unknowable, incomprehensible Father came forth. He came down from above for the annulment of the deficiency.

Then the great Logos, the divine Autogenes, and the incorruptible man Adamas mingled with each other. A Logos of man came into being. However, the man came into being through a word.

He gave praise to the great, invisible, incomprehensible, virginal Spirit, and the male virgin, and the thrice-male child, and the male virgin Youel, and Esephech, the holder of glory, the child of the child and the crown of his glory, and the great Doxomedon-aeon, and the thrones which are in him, and the powers which surround him, the glories and the incorruptions, and their whole pleroma which I mentioned before, and the ethereal earth, the receiver of God, where the holy men of the great light receive shape, the men of the Father of the silent, living silence, the Father and their whole pleroma as I mentioned before.

The great Logos, the divine Autogenes, and the incorruptible man Adamas gave praise, (and) they asked for a power and eternal strength for the Autogenes for the completion of the four aeons, in order that, through them, there may appear the glory and the power of the invisible Father of the holy men of the great light which will come to the world which is the image of the night. The incorruptible man Adamas asked for them a son out of himself, in order that he (the son) may become father of the immovable, incorruptible race, so that, through it (the race), the silence and the voice may appear, and, through it, the dead aeon may raise itself, so that it may dissolve.

And thus there came forth, from above, the power of the great light, the Manifestation. She gave birth to the four great lights: Harmozel, Oroiael, Davithe, Eleleth, and the great incorruptible Seth, the son of the incorruptible man Adamas.

And thus the perfect hebdomad which exists in hidden mysteries became complete. When she [receives] the [glory] she becomes eleven ogdoads.
And the Father nodded approval; the whole pleroma of the lights was well pleased. Their consorts came forth for the completion of the ogdoad of the divine Autogenes: the Grace of the first light Harmozel, the Perception of the second light Oroiael, the Understanding of the third light Davithe, the Prudence of the fourth light Eleleth. This is the first ogdoad of the divine Autogenes.

And the Father nodded approval; the whole pleroma of the lights was well pleased. The ministers came forth: the first one, the great Gamaliel (of) the first great light Harmozel, and the great Gabriel (of) the second great light Oroiael, and the great Samlo of the great light Davithe, and the great Abrasax of 53 [the great light] Eleleth. And [the] consorts of these came forth by the will of the good pleasure of the Father: the Memory of the great one, the first, Gamaliel; the Love of the great one, the second, Gabriel; the Peace of the third one, the great Samlo; the eternal Life of the great one, the fourth, Abrasax. Thus were the five ogdoads completed, a total of forty, as an uninterpretable power.

Then the great Logos, the Autogenes, and the word of the pleroma of the four lights gave praise to the great, invisible, uncappable, virginal Spirit, and the male virgin, and the great Doxomedon-aeon, and the thrones which are in them, and the powers which surround them, glories, authorities, and the powers, the thrice-male child, and the male virgin Youel, and Esephech, the holder of glory, [the child] of the child and the crown of [his] glory, the whole pleroma, and all the glories which are there, the infinite pleromas, the unnameable aeons, in order that they may name the Father the fourth with the incorruptible race, (and) that they may call the seed of the Father the seed of the great Seth.

Then everything shook, and trembling took hold of the incorruptible ones. Then the three male children came forth from above down into the unborn ones, and the self-begotten ones, and those who were begotten in what is begotten. The greatness came forth, the whole greatness of the great Christ. He established thrones in glory, myriads without number, in the four aeons around them, myriads without number, powers and glories and incorruptions. And they came forth in this way.

And the incorruptible, spiritual church increased in the four lights of the great, living Autogenes, the god of truth, praising, singing, (and) giving glory with one voice, with one accord, with a mouth which does not rest, to the Father, and the Mother, and the Son,
and their whole pleroma, just as I mentioned <before>. The five seals which possess the myriads, and they who rule over the aeons and they who bear the glory of the leaders were given the command to reveal to those who are worthy. Amen.

Then the great Seth, the son of the incorruptible man Adamas, gave praise to the great, invisible, uncallable, unnameable, virgin Spirit, and the <male virgin, and the thrice-male child, and the male> virgin Youel, and Esephech, the holder of glory, and the crown of his glory, the child of the child, and the great Doxomedon-aeons, and the pleroma which I mentioned before; and asked for his seed.

Then there came forth from that place the great power of the great light Plesithea, the mother of the angels, the mother of the lights, the glorious mother, the virgin with the four breasts, bringing the fruit from Gomorrah as spring and Sodom, which is the fruit of the spring of Gomorrah which is in her. She came forth through the great Seth.

Then the great Seth rejoiced about the gift which was granted him by the incorruptible child. He took his seed from her with the four breasts, the virgin, and he placed it with him in the fourth aeon (or, IV 68, 3: [in] the four aeons), in the third great light Davithe.

After five thousand years the great light Eleleth spoke: "Let someone reign over the chaos and Hades." And there appeared a cloud whose name is hylic Sophia. She looked out on the parts of the chaos, her face being like her form blood. And [the great] angel Gamaliel spoke [to the great Gabriel], the minister of [the great light] Oroiael; he said, "Let an angel come forth in order that he may reign over the chaos and Hades." Then the cloud, being agreeable, came forth in the two monads, each one of which had light. [...] the throne, which she had placed in the cloud above. Then Sakla, the great angel, saw the great demon who is with him, Nebruel. And they became together a begetting spirit of the earth. They begot assisting angels. Sakla [said] to the great demon Nebruel, "Let [the twelve aeons come into being in the] aeon, worlds... the great angel [Sakla] said by the will of the Autogenes, "There shall be the of the number of seven." And he said to the [great angels], "Go and [let each] of you reign over his [world]." Each one of these twelve angels went forth. The first angel is Athoth. He is the one whom [the great] generations of men call. The second is Harmas, who is [the eye of the fire]. The third is Galila. The fourth is Yobel. The fifth is Adonaios, who is [called] Sabaoth. The sixth is Cain,
whom] the [great generations of] men call the sun. The [seventh is Abel]; the eighth Akirressina; the [ninth Yubel]. The tenth is Harm[upael. The] eleventh is Arch[ir-Adonin]. The twelfth [is Belias. These] are the ones who preside over Hades [and the chaos].

And after the founding [of the world] Sakla said to his [angels], "I, I am a [jealous] god, and apart from me nothing has [come into being," since he] trusted in his nature.

Then a voice came from on high, saying, "The Man exists, and the Son of the Man." Because of the descent of the image above, which is like its voice in the height of the image which has looked out, through the looking out of the image above, the first creature was formed.

Because of this Metanoia came to be. She received her completion and her power by the will of the Father and his approval with which he approved of the great, incorruptible, immovable race of the great mighty men of the great Seth, in order that he may sow it in the aeons which had been brought forth, so that, through her (Metanoia), the deficiency may be filled up. For she had come forth from above down to the world which is the image of the night. When she had come, she prayed for (the repentance of) both the seed of the archon of this aeon and (the) authorities who had come forth from him, that defiled (seed) of the demon-begetting god which will be destroyed, and the seed of Adam and the great Seth, which is like the sun.

Then the great angel Hormos came to prepare, through the virgins of the corrupted sowing of this aeon, in a Logos-begotten, holy vessel, through the holy Spirit, the seed of the great Seth.

Then the great Seth came and brought his seed. And it was sown in the aeons which had been brought forth, their number being the amount of Sodom. Some say that Sodom is the place of pasture of the great Seth, which is Gomorrah. But others (say) that the great Seth took his plant out of Gomorrah and planted it in the second place to which he gave the name Sodom.

This is the race which came forth through Edokla. For she gave birth through the word to Truth and Justice, the origin of the seed of the eternal life which is with those who will persevere because of the knowledge of their emanation. This is the great, incorruptible race which has come forth through three worlds to the world.

And the flood came as an example for the consummation of the aeon. But it will be sent into the world because of this race. A conflagration will come upon the earth. And grace will be with those who...
belong to the race through the prophets and the guardians who guard the life of the race. Because of this race famines will occur and plagues. But these things will happen because of the great, incorruptible race. Because of this race temptations will come, a falsehood of false prophets.

Then the great Seth saw the activity of the devil, and his many guises, and his schemes which will come upon his incorruptible, immovable race, and the persecutions of his powers and his angels, and their error, that they acted against themselves.

Then the great Seth gave praise to the great, uncalleable, virginal Spirit, and the male virgin Barbelon, and the thrice-male child Telmael Telmael Heli Heli Machar Machar Seth, the power which really truly lives, and the male virgin Youel, and Esepech, the holder of glory, and the crown of his glory, and the great Doxomedon-aeon, and the thrones which are in him, and the powers which surround them, and the whole pleroma, as I mentioned before. And he asked for guards over his seed.

Then there came forth from the great aeons four hundred ethereal angels, accompanied by the great Aerosiel and the great Selmchel, to guard the great, incorruptible race, its fruit, and the great men of the great Seth, from the time and the moment of Truth and Justice until the consummation of the aeon and its archons, those whom the great judges have condemned to death.

Then the great Seth was sent by the four lights, by the will of the Autogenes and the whole pleroma, through (the gift) and the good pleasure of the great invisible Spirit, and the five seals, and the whole pleroma.

He passed through the three parousias which I mentioned before: the flood, and the conflagration, and the judgment of the archons and the powers and the authorities, to save her (the race) who went astray, through the reconciliation of the world, and the baptism through a Logos-begotten body which the great Seth prepared for himself, secretly through the virgin, in order that the saints may be begotten by the holy Spirit, through invisible, secret symbols, through a reconciliation of the world with the world, through the renouncing of the world and the god of the thirteen aeons, and (through) the convocations of the saints, and the ineffable ones, and the incorruptible bosom, and (through) the great light of the Father who preexisted with his Providence and established through her the holy baptism that surpasses the heaven, through the incorruptible, Logos-begotten one,
even Jesus the living one, even he whom the great Seth has put on. And through him he nailed the powers of the thirteen aeons, and established those who are brought forth and taken away. He armed them with an armor of knowledge of this truth, with an unconquerable power of incorruptibility.

There appeared to them the great attendant Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus, the living water, and the great leaders, James the great and Theopemptos and Isaouel, and they who preside over the spring of truth, Micheus and Michar and Mnesinous, and he who presides over the baptism of the living, and the purifiers, and Sesengenpharanges, and they who preside over the gates of the waters, Micheus and Michar, and they who preside over the mountain Seldao and Elainos, and the receivers of the great race, the incorruptible, mighty men of the great Seth, the ministers of the four lights, the great Gamaliel, the great Gabriel, the great Samblo, and the great 65 Abrasax, and they who preside over the sun, its rising, Olses and Hypneus and Heurumaious, and they who preside over the entrance into the rest of eternal life, the rulers Mixanther and Michanor, and they who guard the souls of the elect, Akramas and Strempsouchos, and the great power Heli Heli Machar Machar Seth, and the great invisible, uncallable, unnameable, virginal Spirit, and the silence, and the great light Harmozel, the place of the living Autogenes, the God of the truth, and who is with him, the incorruptible man Adamas, the second, Oroiael, the place of the great Seth, and Jesus, who possesses the life and who came and crucified that which is in the law, the third, Davithe, the place of the sons of the great Seth, the fourth, Eleleth, the place where the souls of the sons are resting, the fifth, Yoel, who presides over the name of him to whom it will be granted to baptize with the holy baptism that surpasses the heaven, the incorruptible one.

But from now on through the incorruptible man Poimael, and they who are worthy of (the) invocation, the renunciations of the five seals in the spring-baptism, these will know their receivers as they are instructed about them, and they will know them (or: be known) by them. These will by no means taste death.

Iē iēus ēō ou ēō oua! Really truly, O Yesseus Mazareus Yessedekeus, O living water, O child of the child, O glorious name, really truly, aiōn o ὅν (or: O existing aeon), iiiī ēēēē eeēe oo oo uuuu ēōōō aaaa{a}, really truly, ēī aaaa Óō óō, O existing one who sees the aeons! Really truly, aee ēēē iiiī uuuuuu ēōōōōōōō, who is eternally
eternal, really truly, iēa aiō, in the heart, who exists, u aei eis aei, ei o ei, ei os ei (or: (Son) forever, Thou art what Thou art, Thou art who Thou art)!

This great name of thine is upon me, O self-begotten Perfect one, who art not outside me. I see thee, O thou who art visible to everyone. For who will be able to comprehend thee in another tongue? Now that I have known thee, I have mixed myself with the immutable. I have armed myself with an armor of light; I have become light. For the Mother was at that place because of the splendid beauty of grace. Therefore I have stretched out my hands while they were folded. I was shaped in the circle of the riches of the light which is in my bosom, which gives shape to the many begotten ones in the light into which no complaint reaches. I shall declare thy glory truly, for I have comprehended thee, sou iēside aeiō aeieois, O aeon, aeon, O God of silence! I honor thee completely. Thou art my place of rest, O son of silence, the formless one who exists in the formless ones, who exists, raising up the man in whom thou wilt purify me into thy life, according to thine imperishable name. Therefore the incense of life is in me. I mixed it with water after the model of all archons, in order that I may live with thee in the peace of the saints, thou who existest really truly for ever.

This is the book which the great Seth wrote, and placed in high mountains on which the sun has not risen, nor is it possible. And since the days of the prophets, and the apostles, and the preachers, the name has not at all risen upon their hearts, nor is it possible. And their ear has not heard it.

The great Seth wrote this book with letters in one hundred and thirty years. He placed it in the mountain that is called Charaxio, in order that, at the end of the times and the eras, by the will of the divine Autogenes and the whole pleroma, through the gift of the untraceable, unthinkable, fatherly love, it may come forth and reveal this incorruptible, holy race of the great savior, and those who dwell with them in love, and the great, invisible, eternal Spirit, and his only begotten Son, and the eternal light, and his great, incorruptible consort, and the incorruptible Sophia, and the Barbelon, and the whole pleroma in eternity. Amen.

The Gospel of the Egyptians. The God-written, holy, secret book. Grace, understanding, perception, prudence (be) with him who has written it, Eugnostos the beloved in the Spirit — in the flesh.
my name is Gongessos — and my fellow lights in incorruptibility, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, Ichthus, God-written (is) the holy book of the great, invisible Spirit. Amen.


Amen.
EUGNOSTOS THE BLESSED (III,3 and V,1)

and

THE SOPHIA OF JESUS CHRIST
(III,4 AND BG 8502,3)

Introduced and translated by

DOUGLAS M. PARROTT

Eugnostos begins as a formal letter written by a teacher to his disciples and subsequently shifts to take on qualities of a revelation discourse. It is without apparent Christian influence. With some minor omissions and one major one, it was used by a Christian gnostic editor as he composed The Sophia of Jesus Christ. In form, Soph. Jes. Chr. is a revelation discourse given by the risen Christ in response to the questions of his disciples. Thus the placing of the two tractates together in the present edition allows one to see the process by which a non-Christian tractate was modified and transformed into a Christian gnostic one. On the basis of the model provided by these two tractates, scholars have conjectured that the same process may have been responsible for other Christian gnostic writings, such as The Gospel of the Egyptians and The Apocryphon of John.

Eugnostos seems to be directed to a general audience interested in certain religious-philosophical problems. Soph. Jes. Chr. was directed to an audience for whom Christianity was an added element in their religious environment. The audience may have been made up of non-Christian Gnostics who already knew the tractate Eugnostos. By connecting Christ, in Soph. Jes. Chr., with the prediction at the end of Eugnostos (90,6-11), the editor may have hoped to persuade them that Christ was the latest incarnation of the gnostic savior. Or the audience may have consisted of non-gnostic Christians, and the editor may have wanted to persuade them that the religion revealed by Christ was gnostic Christianity. Perhaps the editor had both groups in mind.

The main intent of Eugnostos appears to have been to assert and describe the existence of an invisible, supercelestial region beyond the visible world — a region not reflected in the speculations of philosophers (whose views, as they are described, resemble those of Stoics, Epicureans, and Babylonian astrologers). Ruling that region is a hierarchy of five principal divine beings: Unbegotten Father; his reflection, called Self-Father; Self-Father’s hypostatized power, Immortal Man, who is androgynous; Immortal Man’s androgynous son, Son of Man; and Son of Man’s androgynous son, the Savior. The names of the female aspects of the last three include the term Sophia. These divine beings each have their own sphere or aeon, and numerous attendant and subordinate beings. A special group, called “the generation over whom there is no kingdom among the kingdoms that exist,” has its origin and true home with Unbegotten Father.
A second group of six divine beings spring from the first five. These are said to resemble the first. Ineffable joy and unutterable jubilation characterize existence in the supercelestial region; and from there come patterns or types for subsequent creations. Following a summary passage (85,9-21), the tractate concludes with an appendix dealing with the realm of Immortal Man, which is our aeon. *Eugnostos* shows the influence of the transcendent realm upon this world. With one brief exception (85,8), which is probably an editorial addition, the influence is benign. *Eugnostos*, then, cannot be considered gnostic in any classic sense.

In the *Soph. Jes. Chr.* the following major points are added: the Savior (Christ) came from the supercelestial region (III 93,8-10; 94,10-14; 107,11-14; 118,15-16). Sophia is the one responsible for the fall of drops of light from the divine realm into the visible world (III 107,16-17; III 114,13/BG 119,9). Furthermore, a god exists who, with his subordinate powers, directly rules this world to the detriment of those who come from the divine realm (III 107,3-11; BG 119,2-121,13). Sex, it is suggested, is the means by which enslavement to the powers is perpetuated (III 108,10-14). But the Savior (Christ) broke the bonds imposed by the powers, and taught others to do the same (III 107,15-108,4; BG 121,13-122,3; III 118,3-25). Two classes of persons will be saved: those who know the Father in pure knowledge (that is, as described in *Soph. Jes. Chr.*), who will go to him; and those who know the Father defectively (III 117,8-118,2), who will go to the Eighth. In addition, it should be noted that the disciples named in *Soph. Jes. Chr.*, Philip, Matthew, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Mary, reflect a tradition within Gnosticism of disciples who are distinctively gnostic, and who are contrasted with some regularity, and in various ways, with “orthodox” or “orthodox turned gnostic” disciples (principally, Peter and John).

The notion of three divine men in the heavenly hierarchy appears to be based on Genesis 1-3 (Immortal Man = God; Son of Man = Adam [81,12]; Son of Son of Man, Savior = Seth). Because of the presence of Seth (although unnamed in the tractate), *Eugnostos* must be thought of as Sethian, in some sense. However, since it is not classically gnostic and lacks other elements of developed Sethian thought, it can only be characterized as proto-Sethian. Egyptian religious thought also appears to have influenced its picture of the supercelestial realm. The probable place of origin for *Eugnostos*, then, is Egypt. A very early date is suggested by the fact that Stoics, Epicureans and astrologers are called “all the philosophers.” That characterization would have been appropriate in the first century B.C.E., but not later. *Eugnostos* and *Soph. Jes. Chr.* may have influenced the Sethian-Ophites, as described by Irenaeus. Some have proposed an influence by *Eugnostos* on Valentinianism. Because of the dating of *Eugnostos*, it would not be surprising if *Soph. Jes. Chr.* had been composed soon after the advent of Christianity in Egypt — the latter half of the first century C.E. That possibility is supported by the tractate’s relatively nonpolemical tone.

The two versions of *Eugnostos* differ from each other at significant points, attesting a long period of usage. The two versions of *Soph. Jes. Chr.* are very close. The translation which follows is based on the versions of Codex III; the other versions have been employed in instances where pages are no longer extant and where the text has required restoration.
EUGNOSTOS THE BLESSED

III 70, 1-90, 12;
Supplemented by V 7, 23-9, 9

Eugnostos, the Blessed, to those who are his.

THE SOPHIA OF JESUS CHRIST

III 90, 1-119, 18
Supplemented by BG 107, 1-111, 1 and 118, 13-112, 9

The Sophia of Jesus Christ.

After 15 he rose from the dead, his twelve disciples and seven women continued to be his followers and went to Galilee onto the mountain called "Divination and Joy." When they gathered together and were perplexed about the underlying reality of the universe and the plan and the holy providence and the power of the authorities and about everything that the Savior is doing with them in the secret of the holy plan, the Savior appeared, not in his previous form, but in the invisible spirit. And his likeness resembles a great angel of light. But his resemblance I must not describe. No mortal flesh could endure it, but only pure (and) perfect flesh, like that which he taught us about on the mountain called "Of Olives" in Galilee. And he said: "Peace be to you (pl.)! My peace I give to you!" And they all marveled and were afraid.

The Savior laughed and said to them: "What are you thinking about? (Why) are you perplexed? What are you searching for?" Philip said: "For the un-
Rejoice in this, that you know (V [1], 3-4: Greetings! I want [you to know]) that all men born from the foundation of the world until now are dust. While they have inquired about God, who he is and what he is like, they have not found him. The wisest among them have speculated about the truth from the ordering of the world. And the speculation has not reached the truth. For the ordering is spoken of in three (different) opinions by all the philosophers, (and) hence they do not agree. For some of them say about the world that it was directed by itself. Others, that it is providence (that directs it). Others, that it is fate. But it is none of these. Again, of the three voices I have just mentioned, none is true.

For whatever is from itself is an empty life; it is self-made. Providence is foolish. (And) fate is an undiscerning thing.

Whoever, then, is able to get free of these three voices I have just mentioned and come by means of another voice to confess the God of truth and agree in everything concerning him, he is imderlying reality of the universe and the plan.”

The Savior said to them: “I want you to know that all men born on earth from the foundation of the world until now, being dust, while they have inquired about God, who he is and what he is like, have not found him. Now the wisest among them have speculated from the ordering of the world and (its) movement. But their speculation has not reached the truth. For it is said that the ordering is directed in three ways by all the philosophers, (and) hence they do not agree. For some of them say about the world that it is directed by itself. Others, that it is providence (that directs it). Others, that it is fate. But it is none of these. Again, of the three voices I have just mentioned, none is close to the truth, and (they are) from man. But I, who came from Infinite Light, I am here — for I know him (Light) — that I might speak to you about the precise nature of the truth. For whatever is from itself is a polluted life; it is self-made. Providence has no wisdom in it. And fate does not discern.

But to you it is given to know; and whoever is worthy of knowledge will receive (it), whoever has not been begotten by the sowing of unclean rubbing but by First Who Was Sent, for he
mortal, dwelling in the midst of mortal men.

He Who Is is ineffable. No principle knew him, no authority, no subjection, nor any creature from the foundation of the world, except he alone.

For he is immortal and eternal, having no birth; for everyone who has birth will perish. He is unbegotten, having no beginning; for everyone who has a beginning has an end. No one rules over him. He has no name; for whoever has a name is the creation of another. He has no human form; for whoever has human form is the creation of another. He has his own semblance — not like the semblance we have received and seen, but a strange semblance that surpasses all things and is better than the totalities. It looks to every side and sees itself from itself. He is infinite; he is incomprehensible. He is ever imperishable (and) has no likeness (to anything). He is unchanging good. He is faultless. He is everlasting. He is blessed. He is unknowable, while he (none-is an immortal in the midst of mortal men."

Matthew said to him: "Lord, no one can find the truth except through you. Therefore teach us the truth." The Savior said: "He Who Is is ineffable. No principle knew him, no authority, no subjection, nor any creature from the foundation of the world until now, except he alone and anyone to whom he wants to make revelation through him who is from First Light. From now on I am the Great Savior. For he is immortal and eternal. Now he is eternal, having no birth; for everyone who has birth will perish. He is unbegotten, having no beginning; for everyone who has a beginning has an end. Since no one rules over him, he has no name; for whoever has a name is the creation of another. (BG 84, 13-17 adds: He is unnameable. He has no human form; for whoever has human form is the creation of another.) And he has a semblance of his own — not like what you have seen and received, but a strange semblance that surpasses all things and is better than the universe. It looks to every side and sees itself from itself. Since it is infinite, he is ever incomprehensible. He is imperishable and has no likeness (to anything). He is unchanging good. He is faultless. He is eternal. He
EUGNOSTOS (III,3)

theless) knows himself. He is immeasurable. He is untraceable. He is perfect, having no defect. He is imperishably blessed. He is called "Father of the Universe."

Before anything is visible among those that are visible, the majesty and the authorities that are in him, he embraces the totalities of the totalities, and nothing embraces him. For he is all mind, thought and reflecting, considering, rationality and power. They all are equal powers. They are the sources of the totalities. And their whole race (from first) to last is in the foreknowledge of Unbegotten, is blessed. While he is not known, he ever knows himself. He is immeasurable. He is untraceable. He is perfect, having no defect. He is imperishably blessed. He is called 'Father of the Universe.'

Philip said: "Lord, how, then, did he appear to the perfect ones?" The perfect Savior said to him: "Before anything is visible of those that are visible, the majesty and the authority are in him, since he embraces the whole of the totalities, while nothing embraces him. For he is all mind. And he is thought and considering and reflecting and rationality and power. They all are equal powers. They are the sources of the totalities. And their whole race from first to last was in his foreknowledge, (that of) the infinite Unbegotten Father."

Thomas said to him: "Lord, Savior, why did these come to be, and why were these revealed?" The perfect Savior said: "I came from the Infinite that I might tell you all things. Spirit Who Is was the begetter, who had the power of a begetter and form-[giver's] nature, that the great wealth that was hidden in him might be revealed. Because of his mercy and his love he wished to bring forth fruit by himself, that he might not enjoy his goodness alone
for they had not yet come to visibility. 1

Now a difference existed 1 among the imperishable aeons. 20
Let us, then, consider (it) this way. 1

Everything that came from the perishable will perish, since it came 1 from the perishable. Whatever came 74 from imperishableness will not 1 perish but will become 1 imperishable, since it came from 1 imperishableness. So, 5 many men went astray 1 because they had not known this difference; that 1 is, they died.

But this much is 1 enough, since it is impossible for anyone 1 to dispute the nature of the words 10 I have just spoken about the blessed, 1 imperishable, true God. 1

Now, if anyone 1 wants to believe the words 1 set down (here), let him go 15 from what is hidden to the end of what is visible, 1 and this Thought 1 will in-

but (that) other spirits 1 of the Un-
wavering Generation might bring forth 10 body and fruit, glory and 1 honor in imperishableness and 1 his infinite grace, 1 that his trea-
sure might be revealed 1 by Self-
begotten God, 15 the father of every imperishableness and 1 those that came to be afterward. 1 But they had not yet come to visibility.

Now a great difference 1 exists among the imperishables.” He called 20 out saying: “Whoever 1 has ears to hear about 1 the infini-
ties, let him hear”; 1 and “I have addressed those who are awake.”
1 Still he continued [98] and said:

“Everything that came 1 from the perishable will perish, 1 since it came from 1 the perishable. But whatever came 5 from imperish-
ableness does not perish 1 but be-
comes imperishable (BG 89, 16-17 adds: since it is from imperishable-
ness). So, many men 1 went astray because they had not known this 1 difference and they died.”

Mary said to him: 10 “Lord, 1 then how will we know that?” 1

The perfect Savior said: 1

“Come (pl.) from invisible 1 things to the end of those that are visible, 15 and the very emanation
struct him how faith in those things that are not visible was found in what is visible. This is a knowledge principle.

The Lord of the Universe is not rightly called "Father" but "Forefather." For the Father is the beginning (or principle) of what is visible. For he (the Lord) is the beginningless Forefather. He sees himself within himself, like a mirror, having appeared in his likeness as Self-Father, that is, Self-Begetter, and as Confroner, since he confronted Unbegotten First Existent. He is indeed of equal age with the one who is before him, but he is not equal to him in power.

Afterward he revealed many confronting, self-begotten ones, equal in age (and) power, being in glory and without number, who are called "The Generation over Whom There Is No Kingdom among the Kingdoms That Exist."

And the whole multitude of the place over which there is no kingdom is called "Sons of Unbegotten Father."

Now the Unknowable is ever [full] of imperishableness [and] ineffable joy. They all are at rest of Thought will reveal to you how faith in those things that are not visible was found in those that are visible, those that belong to Unbegotten Father. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.

The Lord of the Universe is not called 'Father' but 'Forefather.' (For the Father is) the beginning (or principle) of those that will appear, but he (the Lord) is the beginningless Forefather. Seeing himself within himself in a mirror, he appeared resembling himself, but his likeness appeared as Divine Self-Father and (as) Confroner over the confronted ones, First Existent Unbegotten Father. He is indeed of equal age (with) the Light that is before him, but he is not equal to him in power.

"And afterward was revealed a whole multitude of confronting, self-begotten ones, equal in age and power, being in glory (and) without number, whose race is called 'The Generation over Whom There Is No Kingdom,' 'from the one in whom you yourselves have appeared from these men.' And that whole multitude over which there is no kingdom is called 'Sons of Unbegotten Father, God, [Savior], Son of God,' whose likeness is with you. Now he is the Unknowable, who is full of ever imperishable glory and ineffable joy.
They all are at rest in him, ever rejoicing in ineffable joy over the unchanging glory and the measureless jubilation that was never heard or known among all the aeons and their worlds. But this much is enough, lest we go on endlessly. This is another knowledge principle from <Self->begotten.

Matthew said to him: “Lord, Savior, how was Man revealed?” The perfect Savior said: “I want you to know that he who appeared before the universe in infinity, Self-grown Self-constructed Father, being full of shining, ineffable light, in the beginning, when he decided to have his likeness become a great power, immediately the principle (or beginning) of that Light appeared as Immortal Androgynous Man, that through that Immortal Man they might attain their salvation and awake from forgetfulness through the interpreter who was sent, who is with you until the end of the poverty of the robbers.

“And his consort is the Great Sophia who from the first was...
Through Immortal Man appeared the first designation, namely, divinity and kingdom, for the Father, who is called ‘Self-Father Man,’ revealed this. He created a great aeon for his own majesty. He gave him great authority, and he ruled over all creations. He created gods and archangels and angels, myriads without number for retinue.

Now through that Man originated divinity [and kingdom]. Therefore he was called ‘God of gods,’ ‘King of kings.’

First Man is ‘Faith’ for those who will come afterward. He has, within, a unique mind (and) thought—just as he is it (thought)—(and) reflecting and considering, rationality and power. All the attributes that exist are perfect and immortal. In respect to imperishableness, they are indeed equal. (But) in respect to power, there is a difference, like the difference between father and son, and son and thought, and the thought and the remainder.

As I said earlier, among the things that were created, the monad is first, The dyad follows it, and the triad, up to the tenths. Now the tenths rule the destined in him for union by Self-begotten Father, from Immortal Man ‘who appeared as First and divinity and kingdom,’ for the Father, who is called ‘Man, Self-Father,’ revealed this. And he created a great aeon, whose name is Ogdoad, for his own majesty.

‘He was given great authority, and he ruled over the creation of poverty. He created gods and angels (and) archangels, myriads without number for retinue from that Light and the tri-male Spirit, which is that of Sophia, his consort. For from this God originated divinity and kingdom. Therefore he was called ‘God of gods,’ ‘King of kings.’

‘20 First Man has his unique mind, within, and thought—just as he is it (thought)—(and) considering, reflecting, rationality, power. All the attributes that exist are perfect and immortal. In respect to imperishableness, they are indeed equal. (But) in respect to power, they are different, like the difference between father and son, (and son) and thought, and the thought and the remainder.

“As I said earlier, among the things that were created, the monad is first.
hundredths; the hundredths rule the thousandths; the thousandths rule the ten thousandths. This is the pattern (among the) immortals. First Man is like this: His monad

(Pages 79 and 80 are missing. They are replaced here with the corresponding section from Eugnostos — Codex V, the beginning of which is somewhat different from the final partial sentence of III 78.)

V [7] ^23 Again it is this pattern [that] exists among the immortals: the monad and the thought are those things that belong to [Immortal] Man. The thinkings [are] for (the) decades, and the hundreds are [the teachings,] [and] the thousands are the counsels, [and] the ten thousands [are] the powers. [Now] those [who] come [from the . . .] exist with their [ . . .] [in] every aeon [ . . .] [. . .] [8] [. . . In the beginning, thought] and thinkings [appeared from] mind, [then] teachings [from] thinkings, counsels [from teachings], (and) power [from] counsels. And after all [the attributes,] all that [was revealed] appeared from [his powers.] And [from] what [was] created, what was [fashioned] appeared. And what was formed appeared from what was [fashioned.] What was named appeared from what was form-

And after everything, all that was revealed appeared from his power. And from what was created, all that was fashioned appeared; from what was fashioned appeared what was formed; from what was formed, what was named. Thus came the difference among the unbegotten
ed, 15 while the difference among begotten things 1 appeared from what was [named], 1 from beginning to end, by 1 power of all the aeons. Now Immortal Man 1 is full of every 20 imperishable glory and ineffable 1 joy. His whole kingdom 1 rejoices in 1 everlasting rejoicing, those who never 1 have been heard of or known 25 in any aeon that 1 [came] after [them and 1 its [worlds].

Afterward [another] 1 [principle] came from Immortal [Man], 1 who is [called] “Self-perfected 30 [Begetter.]” 1 [When he received the consent] of his [consort,] 1 [Great Sophia, he] revealed 1 [that first-begotten androgyne,] 9 [who is called] 1 “First-begotten [Son] 1 [of God].” His female aspect 1 [is “First-begotten Sophia, 5 [Mother of the Universe]],” whom some 1 [call] “Love.” 1 [Now] First-begotten, since he has 1 [his] authority from 1 his [father], III[81] created angels, 1 myriads [without] number, 1 for retinue. The whole multitude 1 of those angels are called 5 “Assembly of the 1 Holy Ones, the

ones 1 from beginning to end.” 1

Then Bartholomew 1 said to him: “How (is it that) <he> was designated in 104 the Gospel ‘Man’ 1 and ‘Son of Man’? 1 To which of 1 them, then, is this Son related?” The Holy One 5 said to him:

“I want you 1 to know that First Man 1 is called 1 ‘Begetter, Self-perfected 1 Mind.’ 10 He reflected with Great 1 Sophia, his consort, and revealed 1 his first-begotten, 1 androgynous son. His 1 male name 15 is designated ‘First Begetter 1 Son of God’; his female name, ‘First 1 Begettress Sophia, Mother of the Universe.’ 1 Some call her 20 ‘Love.’ Now First-1 begotten is called 1 ‘Christ.’ Since he has authority 1 from his father, he created 1 a multitude of angels 105 without number for retinue 1 from Spirit and Light.” 1
Now when these greet each other, their embraces become angels like themselves.

First Begetter Father is called "Adam of the Light."

And the kingdom of Son of Man is full of ineffable joy and unchanging jubilation, (they) ever rejoicing in ineffable joy over their imperishable glory, which has never been heard nor has it been revealed to all the aeons that came to be and their worlds.

His disciples said to him: "Lord, reveal to us about the one called 'Man' that we also may know his glory exactly." The perfect Savior said: "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear. First Begetter Father is called 'Adam, Eye of Light,' because he came from shining Light, [and] his holy angels, who are ineffable and shadowless, ever rejoicing with joy in their reflecting, which they received from their Father. The whole kingdom of Son of Man, who is called 'Son of God,' is full of ineffable and shadowless joy, and unchanging jubilation, (they) rejoicing over his imperishable glory, which has never been heard until now, nor has it been revealed in the aeons that came afterward and their worlds. I came from Self-begotten and First Infinite Light that I might reveal everything to you."

Again, his disciples said: "Tell us clearly how (it is that) they came down from the invisibilities, from the immortal (realm) to the world that dies?"

The perfect Savior said: "Son of Man consented with Sophia, his consort, and revealed a great androgynous light. [82] [His] masculine name is [designated] 'Savior, Begetter

Then Son of Man consented with Sophia, his consort, and revealed a great androgynous light. [82] [His] masculine name is [designated] 'Savior, Begetter
of All things." His feminine name is designated "Sophia, All-Begettress." Some call her "Pistis."

Then Savior consented with his consort, Pistis Sophia, and revealed six androgynous spiritual beings who are the type of those who preceded them. Their male names are these: first, "Unbegotten"; second, "Self-begotten"; third, "Begetter"; fourth, "First Begetter"; fifth, "All-Begetter"; sixth, "Arch-Begetter." Also the names of the females are these: first, "All-wise Sophia"; second, "All-Mother Sophia"; third, "All-Begettress Sophia"; fourth, "First Begettress Sophia"; fifth, "Love Sophia"; [83] [sixth], "Pistis Sophia."

[From the] consenting of those I have just mentioned, thoughts appeared in the aeons that exist. From thoughts, reflectings; from reflectings, considerings; from considerings, rationalities; from rationalities, wills; from wills, words.

Then the twelve powers, whom I have just discussed, consented with each other. <Six> males (each) (and) <six> females (each) were revealed, so that there are seventy-two powers. Each one of the seventy-two revealed five spiritual (powers), which (together) are the three hundred sixty powers. The union of them all is the will.
Therefore our aeon came to be as the type of Immortal Man. Time came to be as the type of First Begetter, his son. [The year] came to be as the type of Savior. The twelve months came to be as the type of the twelve powers. The three hundred sixty days of the year came to be as the type of the three hundred sixty powers who appeared from Savior. Their hours and moments came to be as the type of the angels who came from them (the three hundred sixty powers) (and) who are without number.

All who come into the world, like a drop from the Light, are sent by him to the world of Almighty, that they might be guarded by him. And the bond of his forgetfulness bound him by the will of Sophia, that the matter might be revealed through it to the whole world in poverty concerning his (Almighty's) arrogance and blindness and the ignorance that he was named. But I came from the places above by the will of the great Light, (I) who escaped from that bond; I have cut off the work of the robbers; I have wakened that drop that was sent from Sophia, that it might bear much fruit through me and be perfected and not again be defective but be joined through me, the Great Savior, that his glory might be
revealed, so that Sophia might also be justified in regard to that defect, that her sons might not again become defective but might attain honor and glory and go up to their Father and know the words of the masculine Light. And you were sent by the Son, who was sent that you might receive Light and remove yourselves from the forgetfulness of the authorities, and that it might not again come to appearance because of you, namely, the unclean rubbing that is from the fearful fire that came from their fleshly part. Tread upon their malicious intent.

Then Thomas said to him: "Lord, Savior how many are the aeons of those who surpass the heavens?" The perfect Savior said: "I praise you (pl.) because you ask about the great aeons, for your roots are in the infinities. Now when those whom I have discussed earlier were revealed, he [provided]

And when those whom I have discussed appeared, All-Begetter, their father, very soon

BG 107 Now when those whom I have discussed earlier were revealed, Self-Begetter Father
created 15 twelve aeons 1 for retinue for the twelve 1 angels.

And in 1 each aeon there were six (heavens), 1 so 20 there are seventy-two heavens of the seventy-two 1 powers who appeared 1 from him. And in each of the heavens 1 there were five firmaments, 1 so there are (altogether) three hundred sixty [85] [firmaments] of the three hundred 1 sixty powers that appeared 1 from them.

When the firmaments 1 were complete, they were called 5 “The Three Hundred Sixty Heavens,” according to the name of the 1 heavens that were before them. And all these 1 are perfect and good. And in this 1 way the defect 1 of femaleness appeared.

The first 10 aeon, then, is that of Immortal Man. 1 The second aeon is that of Son of 1 Man, who is called 1 “First Begetter,” ( V 13, 12-13 adds here: The third is that of son of Son of Man), who 1 is called “Savior.” 15

That which embraces these is the aeon 1 over which there is no kingdom, (the aeon) of the 1 Eternal Infinite God, the 1 aeon of the aeons of the immortals 1 who are in it, (the aeon) above the Eighth

very soon created 5 twelve 1 aeons for retinue 1 for the twelve 1 angels.

All 1 these are perfect 10 and good. 1 Thus 1 the defect 1 in the female appeared.”

And (he) said 1 to him: “How many are the 15 aeons of the immortals, 1 starting from the infinities?” 1 The perfect Savior said: 1 "Whoever has 1 ears to hear, let him 108 hear. The first aeon 1 is that of Son of Man, 1 who is called 1 ‘First Begetter,’ 5 who is called 1 ‘Savior,’ 1 who has appeared. 1 The second aeon (is) that of 1 Man, who is called 10 ‘Adam, Eye 1 of Light.’

That which embraces 1 these is the aeon 1 over which there is no kingdom, 1 (the aeon) of the Eternal 15 Infinite God, 1 the Self-begotten aeon 1 of the aeons 1 that are in it, (the aeon) of the immor-
that appeared in chaos.

Now Immortal Man revealed aeons and powers and kingdoms and gave authority to everyone who [appeared from] him to make [whatever they desire] until the days that are above chaos. For these consented with each other and revealed every magnificence, even from spirit, multitudinous lights that are glorious and without number. These received names in the beginning, that is, the first, the middle, the perfect; that is, the first aeon and the second and the third. The first was called "Unity and Rest." Since each one has its own name, the third aeon was designated "Assembly" from the great multitude that appeared in the multitudinous one. Therefore, when the multitude gathers and comes to a unity, they are called "Assembly," from the Assembly that surpassed heaven. Therefore, the Assembly of the [Eighth was] revealed as [androgynous] and was named partly as male and partly as female. The male was called "Assembly," the female, "Life," that it might be shown that from a female came the life in all the aeons. Every name was received, starting from the beginning. tals, whom I described earlier, (the aeon) above the Seventh that appeared from Sophia, which is the first aeon.

"Now Immortal Man revealed aeons and powers and kingdoms and gave authority to all who appear in him that they might exercise their desires until the last things that are above chaos. For these consented with each other and revealed every magnificence, even from spirit, multitudinous lights that are glorious and without number. These were called in the beginning, that is, the first aeon and (the second) and (the third). The first is called 'Unity and Rest.' Each one has its (own) name; for the third aeon was designated 'Assembly' from the great multitude that appeared: in one, a multitude revealed themselves. Now because the multitudes gather and come to a unity, (BG 111, 2-5 adds here: therefore they are called 'Assembly,' from that Assembly that surpasses heaven) we call them 'Assembly' of the Eighth.' It appeared as androgynous and was named partly as male and partly as female. The male is called 'Assembly,' while the female is called 'Life,' that it might be shown that from a female came the life for all the aeons. And every name was received, starting from the beginning.
From his concurrence with his thought, the powers appeared who were called "gods"; and the gods from their considerings revealed divine gods; and the gods from their considerings revealed lords; and the lords of the lords from their words revealed lords; and the lords from their powers revealed archangels; the archangels revealed angels; from them the semblance appeared with structure [and form] for naming all the aeons and their worlds.

All the immortals, whom I have just described, have authority—all of them—from the power of Immortal Man and Sophia, his consort, who was called "Silence," (and) who was named "Silence" because by reflecting without speech she perfected her own majesty. Since the imperishabilities had the authority, each created a great kingdom in the Eighth and (also) thrones and temples (and) firmaments for their own majesties. For these all came by the will of the Mother of the Universe.

Then the Holy Apostles said to him: "Lord, Savior, tell us about those who are in the aeons, since it is necessary for us to ask about them." The perfect Savior said: "If you ask about anything, I will tell you. They created hosts of angels, myriads without number for retinue and their glory. They created virgin

spirits, the ineffable and unchangeable lights. [1] For they have no sickness [1] nor weakness, [10] but it is will. (BG 115, 14 adds here: And they came to be in an instant.)


to them: "I want you to know that Sophia, the Mother of the Universe and the consort, desired by herself to bring these to existence without her male (consort). But by the will of the Father of the Universe, that his unimaginable goodness might be revealed, he created that curtain between the immortals and those that came afterward, that the consequence might follow.

(Pages 115 and 116 are missing. They are replaced here with the corresponding section from the Berlin Gnostic Codex [no. 8502].)

BG 118 every aeon and chaos, that the defect of the female might (appear), and it might come about that Error would contend with her. And these became the curtain of spirit. From the aeons above the emanations of Light, as I have said already, a drop from Light and Spirit came down to the lower regions of Almighty in chaos, that their molded forms might appear from that drop, for it is a judgment on him, Arch-Begetter, who is called 'Yaldabaoth.' That drop revealed their molded forms through the breath, as a living soul. It was withered and it slumbered in the ignorance of the soul. When it became hot from the breath of the Great Light of the Male, and
it took 1 thought, (then) 1 names were received by all who 1 are in the world of chaos 10 and all things that are in 1 it through that 1 Immortal One, when the breath 1 blew into him. 1 But when this came about 15 by the will of Mother 1 Sophia — so that Immortal Man 1 might piece together 121 the garments there 1 for a judgment 1 on the robbers — 1 (he) then welcomed the blowing 5 of that breath; 1 but since he was soul-like, 1 he was not able to take 1 that power for himself 1 until 10 the number of chaos should be complete, (that is,) when the time 1 determined by the great 1 angel is complete.

“Now I have taught 1 you about Immortal 15 Man and have loosed 1 the bonds of the robbers 1 from him. 1 I have broken the gates of 122 the pitiless ones in their presence. 1 I have humiliated their 1 malicious intent, and they all have been shamed 1 and have risen 5 from their ignorance. Because 1 of this, then, I came here, 1 that they might be joined with 1 that Spirit and 1 Breath, III 117 that [. . .] and Breath, and might 1 from two become one, just as from 1 the first, that you might yield much fruit 1 and go up to 5 Him Who Is from the Beginning, in 1 ineffable joy and glory 1 and [honor and] grace of 1 [the Father of the Universe].

“Whoever, [then], knows 1 [the
Father in pure] knowledge 10 [will depart] to the Father 1 [and repose in] Unbegotten 1 [Father]. But [whoever knows] [him defectively] will depart 1 [to the defect] and the rest 15 [of the Eighth. Now] whoever knows 1 Immortal [Spirit] 1 of Light in silence, through reflecting 1 and consent in the truth, 1 let him bring me signs 20 of the Invisible One, and he will become 1 a light in the Spirit of Silence. 1 Whoever knows Son of Man 1 in knowledge and love, 1 let him bring me a sign 118 of Son of Man, that he might depart 1 to the dwelling-places with those in the Eighth. 1

"Behold, I have revealed to you 1 the name of the Perfect One, the whole will 5 of the Mother of the Holy Angels, 1 that the masculine [multitude] 1 may be completed here, 1 that there [might appear, in the aeons,] 1 [the infinities and] 10 those that [came to be in the] untraceable 1 [wealth of the Great] 1 Invisible [Spirit, that they] all [might take] 1 [from his goodness,] 1 even the wealth [of their rest] 15 that has no [kingdom over it]. I 1 came [from First] Who 1 Was Sent, that I might reveal 1 to you Him Who Is from 1 the Beginning, because of the arrogance 20 of Arch-Begetter and his angels, 1 since they say about themselves that 1 they are gods. And I 1 came to remove them from their blindness 1 that I might tell everyone 25
about the God who is above the universe. 119 Therefore, tread upon their graves, humiliate their malicious intent and break their yoke and arouse my own. I have given you authority over all things as Sons of Light, that you might tread upon their power with [your] feet."

These are the things [the] blessed Savior [said,] [and he disappeared] from them. Then [all the disciples] were in [great, ineffable joy] in [the spirit from] that day on. [And his disciples] began to preach [the] Gospel of God, [the] eternal, imperishable [Spirit]. Amen.
THE DIALOGUE OF THE SAVIOR (III,5)

Introduced by

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The title The Dialogue of the Savior appears in the incipit and the explicit of the manuscript and is apparently a later addition. No specific author is indicated anywhere in the text. But the speaker is the "Savior" or the "Lord" (he is never called Jesus or Jesus Christ) in conversation with his disciples Judas, Mary, and Matthew. In this respect, the title "dialogue" is appropriate, except for the first section of the text (120,3-124,22) which is an uninterrupted monologue of the Savior. The text is preserved only in this somewhat fragmentary manuscript, and it is not referred to or quoted in any ancient source. Thus, no external attestation for the date of its composition is available.

The Dialogue of the Savior is a writing of considerable complexity, and its several parts exhibit a great variety in style and content. It is best seen as a compilation of various generations of Christianity and composed in its extant form, originally in Greek, some time during the 2nd century. Parallels to the author's understanding of baptism in deutero-Pauline epistles suggest a date close to the turn of the first century.

The primary source was a dialogue between the Lord and three disciples. This source is preserved in the following sections of the extant work: 124,23-127,19; 128,23-129,16; 131,19-133,21(?); 137,3-146,20, i.e., in about 65% of the present text. These sections are characterized by brief questions, usually from one of the named disciples (sometimes by all disciples) and equally brief answers of the Lord. Sometimes these questions and answers are expanded into longer units discussing a particular topic. Traditional sayings of Jesus used in these questions and answers have parallels in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John, and particularly in The Gospel of Thomas. However, a literary dependence upon any of these writings seems unlikely. Rather, the sayings tradition used here appears to be an independent parallel to the one used in The Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of John.

The form of these brief dialogue units parallels the dialogues found in the Gospel of John. In contrast to some gnostic dialogues which are actually secondarily arranged theological discourses (such as The Sophia of Jesus Christ and Pistis Sophia), the dialogues of the Gospel of John and of The Dialogue of the Savior are not free compositions of an author, but elaborations and interpretations of traditional sayings. In some instances, the dialogical development of the sayings tradition in our document is less advanced and theologically less complex than the Johannine parallels. This would argue for a date of the original dialogue source of this document before the end of the first century.
The sequence of the topics explored in these dialogues has close parallels in sayings of *The Gospel of Thomas*, especially in its saying 2 about the seeking, finding, marvelling, ruling and resting. That saying presents an eschatological timetable which is further explored in the dialogues of this writing. The disciples have sought and found and marvelled, but their ruling and resting will come only in the future. At the present time, they still carry the burden of the flesh, i.e., the body and earthly labor or, in the words of this writing, of "the works of womanhood." Mary who recognizes this receives the highest praise. This theme, the continuation of the works of the female, i.e., the continuation of the human race through childbirth, is prominent in the last portion of the dialogue. It deals with the role of the female in the process of salvation more explicitly than most other early Christian writings (close parallels can be found in *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, quoted by Clement of Alexandria), and it gives Mary a very high estimate as "a woman who had understood completely" (139,11-13).

In the final form of the document, several other traditional pieces have been added to the original dialogue: 1) Fragments of a creation myth (127,19-131,18) which is based upon Gen 1-2. The myth relates how water, originally separated from the earth by a wall of fire, made the world fruitful. In 128,1-129,12, the author has interrupted the account of this myth in order to interpret the term spirit. 2) A cosmological wisdom list (133,23-134,24). The author has added comments about the root of wickedness and about baptism. 3) An apocalyptic vision of which fragments are still recognizable in 134,24-137,3. The vision, taking place on a high mountain from where the whole of heaven and earth can be seen, originally spoke about the rescue of a soul and its installation before God in a new garment. The process is explained by an angelic figure called "Son of Man," a title which *The Dialogue of the Savior* never uses for Jesus.

The final author opened his compilation of these materials with an intriguing section (120,2-124,22), consisting of an exhortation, a prayer of thanksgiving and a gnostic discourse about the passage of the soul through the heavenly powers. This section employs established Christian soteriological language with allusions to passages from the New Testament epistles; it also contains a reference to the Gospel of John (Jn 1:18). With this introduction the entire dialogue is placed into a new context: baptismal initiation. The baptismal theology resolves the conflict between the "already" of a realized eschatology and the "not yet" of a futuristic eschatology. As baptism is understood in the same way as in Eph 2:1-6 and Col 3:1-4, those who are baptized have already passed through death into true life. Metaphorical and mythical language is thus related to a cultic act for the expression of realized eschatology.

Yet, receiving visions in the context of baptism is not the culmination of the experience of redemption. Instead, through the utilization and interpretation of the older dialogue used in the composition, the author presents a discussion of the complex eschatological situation of the disciples. Although the disciples have already sought and found and have marvelled at visions, have experienced the indwelling of the living God and passed through the powers in the experience of baptism, their final entry into ruling and resting is still to come. Their present existence is defined as work in behalf of the revelation, so that they, like their Lord, may save others and "reveal the greatness of the revealer," while they are still wearing the flesh, carrying a burden just as the Lord himself. This also in-
dicates that the “Lord” who is speaking in this dialogue is not the exalted Lord but the “earthly” Jesus. The “place of truth” is not defined in terms of other-worldly existence, but as the place where the Lord is. This emphasis upon the tasks of a Christian life in this world implies that the “dissolution of the works of womanhood” does not suggest a metaphysically motivated sexual asceticism, but speaks of the secret birth through the one who “is coming from the Father.” In spite of the evident employment of gnostic language in the description of the baptismal experience, The Dialogue of the Savior cannot be understood as the simple product of gnostic theology. Rather, it resembles the Gospel of John in its attempt to reinterpret the sayings of Jesus in the horizon of gnostic thought.

THE DIALOGUE OF THE SAVIOR

III 120, 1-147, 23

The Dialogue of the Savior

(1) The Savior said to his disciples, "Already the time has come, brothers, for us to abandon our labor and stand at rest. For whoever stands at rest will rest forever. And I say to you, [be] always [above . . .] time . . . [ . . .] . . . you . . . you . . . [ . . .] 15 . . . anger [is] fearful [ . . .] 1 arise anger . . . [ . . .] [ . . .] 1 but since you have . . . [ . . .] . . . [ . . .] 1 they accepted these words [concerning it] with [fear] and trembling, and it set them up with governors, 1 for from it nothing was forthcoming. 1 But when I came, I opened the path and I taught them about the passage which they will traverse, 1 the elect and solitary, 121 [who have known the Father, having believed] the truth and [all] the praises while you offered praise. 1

(2) "So when you offer praise, do so like this: 5 Hear us, Father, just as you heard your only-begotten son and received him [and] gave him rest from many . . . [ . . . You are the one] whose power 10 [ . . . your] armor . . . [. . . is . . .] . . . light . . . living . . . living . . . . . . . touch . . . [ . . .] . . . the word . . . 15 [ . . .] repentance . . . life 1 [ . . .] . . . you. You are [the] thinking and the [entire] serenity of the solitary. Again: [Hear] us just as you heard your elect. Through your [sacrifice these] will enter; through their [good] works these have saved their souls from these blind [limbs] so that they might exist eternally. Amen.

(3) "I will teach you. When the time of dissolution arrives, the first power of darkness will come upon you. Do not be afraid and
say, 'Behold! The time has come!' But when you see a single staff this ... [ ... ] ... the work ... [ ... ] and the governors ... [ ... ] come upon you ... [ ... ]. Truly, fear is the [power ...] ... So if you are going to be afraid of what is about to come upon you, it will engulf you. For there is not one among them who will spare you or show mercy. But in this way, look at [the ...] in it, since you have mastered every word on earth. It [ ... take] you up to the ... place where there is no rule [ ... tyrant]. When you ... you] will see those who ... and also ... [tell] you ... the reasoning power ... place] of truth ... but ... [.]. But you ... truth, this ... living ... [ ... and] your joy[ ... ]. So ... in order that ... your souls ... lest it ... raise ... [.]. So ... place] of truth ... but ... [.]. But you ... truth, this ... living ... where will they be? ... the spirit [.]."

(4) [Matthew] said, "[How ... 125 ...]"

(5) The Savior said, "[ ... ] ... the things inside you ... will remain, you ... ."

(6) Judas [said], "Lord, ... the works ... these souls, these ... these little ones, when ... where will they be? ... all] the powers ... you, they ... and the [powers ...] ... soul ... 15 ... [ ... ] in everyone ... you] ... the ... and ... ... forget ... ... son ... ... you ... ... you ... ."

(7) The Lord [said], "[ ... ] ... receive] them. These do not die, ... they are not destroyed, for they have known [their] consorts and him who would [receive] ... them. For the truth seeks [out the] wise and the righteous."

(8) The Savior [said], "The lamp [of the body] is the mind. As long as [the things inside] you are set in order, that is, ... your bodies are [luminous]. As long as your hearts are [dark], the luminosity you anticipate ... I will go ... ... my word ... I send ... ."

(9) His [disciples said, "Lord], 'who is it who seeks, and ... reveals?'"
(10) [The Lord said to them], 1 "He who seeks [. . . ] 10 reveals . . . [. . .]."

(11) [Matthew said, "Lord, when] 1 I [. . .] 1 and [when] I speak, who is it who . . . [.] 1 . . . who listens?"

(12) [The Lord] said, 15 "It is the one who speaks who also [listens], and it is the one who can see who also 1 reveals."

(13) [Mary] said, 1 "Lord, behold! 1 Whence [do I] bear the body [while I] 20 weep, and whence while I [. . .]?"]

(14) The Lord said, "[. . .] 1 weep on account of its works [. . .] 1 remain and the mind laughs [. . .] [. . . 127 . . .] 1 spirit. If one does not 1 [. . .] darkness, he will be able to see 1 [. . .]. So I tell you 1 [. . .] light is the darkness 5 [. . .] 1 stand in [. . .] not see the light 1 [. . .] the lie [. . .] 1 they brought them from 1 [. . .] [. . .] 1. You will give 1 [. . .] 10 [. . .] exist] forever 1 [. . .] 1 [. . .] 1 [. . .] ever. Then 1 [all] the powers 15 which are above as well as those 1 [below] will [. . .] you. In that place 1 [there will] be weeping and 1 [gnashing] of teeth over the end of [all] these things."

(15) Judas [said], "Tell 20 [us, Lord], what was [. . .] before 1 [the heaven and the] earth existed."

(16) The Lord said, 1 "There was darkness and water and 128 spirit upon [water]. 1 And I say [to you, . . .] 1 what] you seek [after . . .] 1 inquire after . . . [. . .] 5 within you . . . [. . .] 1 . . . the power and the [mystery . . .] 1 spirit, for from . . . [. . .] 1 wickedness [. . .] come . . . [. . .] 1 mind . . . [. . .] 10 behold . . . [. . .] [. . .] [. . .]."

(17) [. . .] said, "[Lord], 1 tell us 1 where [the . . . is established] and 15 where [the true mind] exists."

(18) The Lord [said], "The fire [of the] 1 spirit came into existence . . . [. . .] 1 both. On this account, the [. . .] 1 came into existence, and 20 the [true] mind came into existence [within] them [. . .]. 1 If someone [sets his soul] 1 up high, [then he will] 1 be exalted."

(19) And Matthew [asked him 129 . . .] 1 took . . . 1 [. . .] 1 it is he who . . . 1 [. . .]."

(20) The Lord [said], 1 "[. . . stronger] than . . . 5 [. . .] 1 you . . . 1 [. . .] 1 [. . .] to follow 1 [you] and all the works 1 [. . .] your hearts. For just as 1 your hearts [. . .], so 10 [. . .] the means to overcome the powers 1 [above] as well as those below 1 [. . .]. I say to you, 1 let him [who possesses] power renounce 1 [it and repent]. And 15 [let] him who [. . .] seek and find and [rejoice]."

(21) Judas [said], "Behold! 1 [I] see that all things exist 1 [. . .] like signs upon 1 [. . .]. On this account did they happen thus." 20
(22) The Lord [said], "When the [Father 1 established] the cosmos, he 1 [ . . . ] water from it 1 [and his] Word came forth from it 130 and it inhabited many . . . [ . . . ]. 1 It was higher than the [path . . . surround] 1 the entire earth . . . [ . . . ] 1 . . . the [collected] water . . . [ . . . ] 5 existing outside them. [ . . . ] 1 . . . the water, a great fire [encircling] 1 them like a wall. . . . [ . . . ] 1 . . . time once many things had become separated [from what] 1 was inside. When the [ . . . ] 10 was established, he looked . . . [ . . . ] 1 and said to it, 'Go, and . . . [ . . . ] 1 from yourself in order that . . . [ . . . ] 1 be in want from generation to [generation, and] 1 from age to age.' [Then it] 15 cast forth from itself [fountains] 1 of milk and [fountains of] 1 honey and oil and [wine] 1 and [good] fruits 1 and sweet flavor and 20 good roots, [in order that] 1 it might not be deficient from generation [to] 1 generation, and from age [to age]. 1

(23) "And it is above . . . [ . . . 131 . . . ] standing [ . . . ] . . . its beauty . . . [ . . . ] . . . and outside [there was a great] light, powerful 5 [ . . . ] . . . resemble it, for it [ . . . ] . . . rules over [all] the aeons [above] and below. [ . . . was] taken from the fire . . . [ . . . ] . . . it was scattered in the 10 [ . . . ] . . . above and [below. All] the works [which] depend on them, it is they [ . . . ] over the heaven above [and over] the earth [below]. 15 On them depend [ . . . ] all [the works]."

(24) [And] when [Judas] 1 heard these things, he bowed down and he 1 [ . . . ] and he offered praise to the Lord. 1

(25) [Mary] hailed her brethren, [saying], "Where are you going to put [these things] about which you ask the son . . . [ . . . ]?"

(26) [The Lord said] to her, "Sister, [ . . . ] will be able to inquire about these things [except 1 for someone who] has somewhere 132 to put them in his [heart . . . ] . . . to come [forth . . . ] 1 and enter . . . [ . . . ] . . . so that they might not hold back . . . [ . . . ] 5 this impoverished cosmos."

(27) [Matthew] said, [ . . . ] "Lord, I want [to see] 1 that place of life [ . . . ] where there is no wickedness, [but rather] 1 there is pure [light]!"

(28) The Lord [said], 10 "Brother [Matthew], 1 you will not be able to see it [as long as you are] 1 carrying flesh around."

(29) [Matthew] said, 1 "Lord, [even if I will] 1 not [be able] to see it, let me [know it]!" 15

(30) The Lord [said], "[Everyone] 1 who has known himself has seen [it in] 1 everything given to him to do [ . . . ] . . . and has come to [ . . . ] 1 it in his [goodness]."

(31) [Judas] 20 responded, saying, "Tell me, Lord, [how it is that . . . ] . . . which shakes the earth 1 moves."
(32) The Lord picked up a [stone and] held it in his hand, [saying, 133 “What am I holding [in] my [hand]?”]

(33) He said, “[It is] a stone.”

(34) He [said] to them, “That which supports [the earth] is that which supports the heaven. 5 When a Word comes forth from the Greatness, it will come on what supports the heaven and the earth. For the earth does not move. Were it to move, it would fall. But it neither moves nor falls, in order that the First Word might not fail. For it was that which established the cosmos and inhabited it and inhaled fragrance from it. For, ... [... ] ... which do not move I [... ] ... you, all the sons of [men]. For you are from [that] place. [In] the hearts of those who speak out of [joy] and truth you exist. Even if it comes forth in [the body] of the Father among men and is not received, still [it] [...] return to its place. Whoever [does not] know [the work] of perfection [knows] nothing. If one does not stand in the darkness, he will not be able to see the light. 134

(35) “If [one] does not [understand how] fire came into existence, he will burn in it, because he does not know the root of it. 5 If one does not first understand water, he knows nothing. For what use is there for him to be baptized in it? If one does not understand how blowing wind came into existence, he will blow away with it. If one does not understand how body, which he bears, came into existence, he will perish with it. And how will someone who does not know the Son know the Father? And to someone who will not know the root of all things, they remain hidden. Someone who will not know the root of wickedness is no stranger to it. Whoever will not understand how he came will not understand how he will go, and he is no [stranger] to this cosmos which [will ...], which will be humiliated.”

(36) Then he ... Judas and Matthew and [Mary ...] ... [ ...] ... the edge of heaven [and] earth. [And] when he placed his [hand] upon them, they hoped that they might ... [ ... ] ... it. Judas raised his eyes and saw an exceedingly high place, and he saw the place of the abyss below. Judas said to Matthew, “Brother, who will be able to climb up to such a height or down to the bottom of the abyss? For there is a tremendous fire there and something very fearful!” At that moment, a Word came forth from it. As it stood there, he saw how it had come [down]. Then he said to it, “[Why] have you come down?”

(37) And the Son of Man greeted them and said to them, “A seed
from a power was deficient and it went down to 20 [the] abyss of the earth. And the Greatness remembered [it] and he sent the [Word] to it. It brought it up into [his presence] so that 136 the First Word might not fail.” [Then his disciples] were amazed at [all the things] he had said to them, and they accepted them on [faith]. And they concluded that it is useless to regard wickedness.

(38) Then he said to his disciples, “Have I not told you that like a visible voice and flash of lightning will the good be taken up to the light?”

(39) Then all his disciples offered him praise and said, “Lord, before you appeared here, who was it who offered you praise? For all praises exist on your account. Or who is it who will bless [you]? For all blessing derives [from] you.”

(40) As they stood there, he saw two spirits bringing a single soul with them in a great flash of lightning. And a Word came forth from the Son of Man, saying, “Give them their garment!” [And] the small one became like the big one. They were [...]. They were [...]. Those who received them. Each other. Then [...]. Disciples, [whom] he had [...].

(41) Mary said, “... see evil ... them from the first ... each other.”

(42) The Lord said, “[...] ... when you see them ... But when you see the Eternal Existent, that is the great vision.”

(43) Then they all said to him, “Tell us about it!”

(44) He said to them, “How do you wish to see it? [By means of a] transient vision or an eternal vision?” He went on and said, “[Strive] to save that [which] can follow you, and to seek it out, and to speak from within it, so that, as you seek it out, everything might be in harmony with you! For I [say] to you, truly, the living God ... in you ... in him.”

(45) Judas said, “Truly, I want [...].”

(46) The Lord said to him, “[...] living [...] dwells [...] entire ... the [deficiency [...].]

(47) Judas said, “Who [...]?"

(48) The Lord said, “[...] all [the] works [which] ... [the remainder, it is they [which you ...] ...”

(49) Judas said, “Behold! The governors dwell above us, so it is they who will rule over us!”

(50) The Lord said, “It is you who will rule over them! But when
you rid yourselves of jealousy, then you will clothe yourselves in light and enter the bridal chamber."  

(51) Judas said, "How will [our] garments be brought to us?"

(52) The Lord said, "There are some who will provide for you, and there are others who will receive [. . .]. For [it is] they [who will give you] your garments. [For] who [will] be able to reach that place [which] is [the] reward? But the garments of life were given to man because he knows the path by which he will leave. And it is difficult even for me to reach it!"

(53) Mary said, "Thus with respect to 'the wickedness of each day,' and 'the laborer is worthy of his food,' and 'the disciple resembles his teacher.' She uttered this as a woman who had understood completely.

(54) The disciples said to him, "What is the fullness and what is the deficiency?"

(55) He said to them, "You are from the fullness and you dwell in the place where the deficiency is. And lo! His light has poured upon me!"

(56) [Matthew] said, "Tell me, Lord, how the dead die [and] how the living live."  

(57) The Lord said, "You have asked me about a saying which eye has not seen, nor have I heard it except from you. But I say to you that when what invigorates a man is removed, he will be called 'dead.' And when what is alive leaves what is dead, what is alive will be called upon."

(58) Judas said, "Why else, for the sake of truth, do they <die> and live?"

(59) The Lord said, "Whatever is born of truth does not die. Whatever is born of woman dies."

(60) Mary said, "Tell me, Lord, why I have come to this place to profit or to forfeit."

(61) The Lord said, "You make clear the abundance of the revealer!"

(62) Mary said to him, "Lord, is there then a place which is . . ., or lacking truth?"

(63) The Lord said, "The place where I am not!"

(64) Mary said, "Lord, you are fearful and [wonderful], and ... [. . .] ... those who do not know [you]."

(65) Matthew said, "[Why] do we not rest [at once]?

(66) The Lord said, "When you lay down these burdens!"
(67) Matthew said, "How does the small join itself to the big?"

(68) The Lord said, "When you abandon the works which will not be able to follow you, then you will rest."

(69) Mary said, "I want to understand all things, [just as] they are."

(70) The [Lord] said, "He who will seek out life! For [this] is their wealth. For the . . . [ . . . ] . . . of this cosmos is [ . . . ], and its gold and its silver are [misleading]."

(71) His [disciples] said to him, "What should we do to ensure that our work will be perfect?"

(72) The Lord [said] to them, "Be [prepared] in face of everything. Blessed is the man who has found the contest . . . his eyes. [Neither] did he kill, nor was [he] killed, but he came forth victorious."

(73) [Judas] said, "Tell me, Lord, what the beginning of the path is."

(74) He said, "Love and goodness. For if one of these existed among the governors, wickedness would never have come into existence."

(75) Matthew said, "Lord, you have spoken about the end of everything without concern."

(76) The Lord said, "You have understood all the things I have said to you and you have accepted them on faith. If you have known them, then they are [yours]. If not, then they are not yours."

(77) They said to him, "What is the place to which we are going?"

(78) The [Lord] said, "Stand in the place you can reach!"

(79) Mary said, "Everything established thus is seen."

(80) The Lord [said], "I have told you [that] it is the one who can see who [reveals]."

(81) His [disciples], numbering twelve, asked him, "Teacher, . . . serenity . . . teach us . . . ."

(82) The Lord said, "... [ . . . ] . . . everything which I have . . . you will . . . . . . you [ . . . ] . . . everything."

(83) [Mary] said, "There is but one saying I will [speak] to the Lord concerning the mystery of truth: In this have we taken our stand, and to the cosmic are we transparent."

(84) Judas said to Matthew, "We [want] to understand the sort of garments we are to be [clothed] with [when] we depart the decay of the [flesh]."

(85) The Lord said, "The governors [and] the administrators possess garments granted [only for a time,] which do not last. [But]
you, as children of truth, not with these transitory garments are you to clothe yourselves. Rather, I say to you that you will become [blessed] when you strip [yourselves]! For it is no great thing...

(86) [. . . said . . .] . . . speak, I . . . [. . .] . . ."

(87) The Lord said, "". . . [. . .] . . . your Father . . . [. . .] . . ."

(88) [Mary said, ""Of what\] sort is that [mustard seed]? Is it something from heaven or is it something from earth?'"

(89) The Lord said, ""When the Father established the cosmos for himself, he left much over from the Mother of the All. Therefore, he speaks and he acts.'"

(90) Judas said, 'You have told us this out of the mind of truth. When we pray, how should we pray?'

(91) The Lord said, 'Pray in the place where there is no woman.'

(92) Matthew said, 'Pray in the place where there is [no woman], he tells us, meaning, 'Destroy the works of womanhood,' not because there is any other [manner of birth], but because they will cease [giving birth].'"

(93) Mary said, 'They will never be obliterated.'

(94) The Lord said, '[Who] knows that they will [not] dissolve and . . . [. . .] . . . [ . . .] . . . [ . . .] . . .?'

(95) Judas said [to Matthew], '[The works] of [womanhood] will dissolve [. . .] the governors will . . . [. . .] . . . Thus will we [become] prepared [for] them.'

(96) [The] Lord [said], 'Right. For do they see [you? Do they see] those who receive [you]? Now behold! A [true] Word is coming forth from the Father [to the abyss], in silence with a [flash of lightning], giving birth. Do they see it or [overpower] it? But you are even more aware of [the path], this one, [before] either [angel or authority has . . .]. Rather it belongs to the Father and the [Son because they are both a single [. . . And] you [will] go via [the path] which you have [known]. Even [if] the governors become huge [they will] not be able to reach it. [But listen!] I [tell] you [that] it is difficult even [for] me [to reach] it!'"

(97) [Mary] said [to the Lord], 'When the works [. . .] . . . [. . . which] dissolves a [work].'

(98) [The Lord said, 'Right. For] you know [. . .] if I [dissolve [. . .] will go to his [place].'

(99) Judas said, 'How is the [spirit] apparent?'

(100) The Lord said, 'How is the sword [apparent]?'
(101) [Judas] said, "How is the light apparent?"

(102) The Lord said, "... [ ... ] in it forever."

(103) [Judas] said, "Who forgives the works of whom? [The works] which ... [ ... ] the cosmos ... [ ... ] who forgives the works."

(104) The Lord [said], "[Who ...] ...? It behooves whomever has understood [the works] to do the will of the Father. And as for [you, strive] to rid [yourselves] of [anger] and [jealousy], and [to strip] yourselves of your ... s, and not to ... [ ... 147 ... 8 ...] ... [ ... ] ... 10 [ ... ] ... 1 [ ... ] ... 1 [ ... ] ... 1 [ ... ] ... reproach [ ... ]. For I say ... [ ... ] ... you take ... [ ... ] ... you ... [ ... ] who has sought, having ... this, will ... [ ... ] he will live forever. And] I say to [you ...] so that you will not lead [your] spirits and your souls into error."

[The Dialogue] of the Savior
THE APOCALYPSE OF PAUL (V,2)

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The first of the four apocalypses in Codex V is a highly syncretistic, gnostic version of the ascension of Paul through the heavens. It bears no literary relationship to the Greek work of the same name, though the latter also deals with Paul's vision of judgment in the heavens. Whether it had affinities with the now lost "Ascension of Paul" used by the "Gnostics" according to Epiphanius, it is impossible to tell, but it should be noted that in Epiphanius' account the "Ascension" refers only to three heavens, whereas it is the uniqueness of the present work that it describes Paul's experience of the fourth to the tenth heavens; the third is mentioned only as a starting point.

Apoc. Paul begins with a narrative of Paul's encounter with a small child on the "mountain of Jericho" en route to Jerusalem. The child, who is Paul's guiding spirit or interpreting angel, sometimes called the Holy spirit in the text, takes him to the heavens to meet his fellow apostles, who accompany him during his further ascent. In the fourth heaven Paul witnesses the judgment of souls; in the fifth, angels driving souls to judgment. The sixth heaven is illuminated by a light from above, and in the seventh Paul meets an old man on a shining throne who threatens to block his further ascent. He continues, however, into the Ogdoad and the ninth and tenth heavens, and when he reaches the last he has been transformed so that he greets, no longer his fellow-apostles, but his fellow-spirits. The language of the narrative fluctuates from third person to first at 19,8, back to third person at 19,18, and finally to first person again from 20,5 on. The inconsistency may perhaps be attributed to literary carelessness rather than to multiple sources, for at these points in the narrative no clear "seams" can be detected on other grounds.

For purposes of analysis, the contents of Apoc. Paul may be divided into three distinct episodes: an epiphany scene, a scene of judgment and punishment, and a heavenly journey. In the first, the little child who meets Paul on the mountain and gives him a revelation most naturally suggests an epiphany of the risen Christ, who is sometimes described as a small child (e.g., in Ap. John (BG,2) 20,19-21,4, Act. Jn. 88). This experience, as the allusion to Gal 1:15 (Jer 1:5) in 18,15-16 suggests, functions as the calling of Paul to be an apostle and thus interprets Gal 1:11-17. The heavenly visitor not only reveals to Paul but conducts him above to (the heavenly) Jerusalem, to the apostles, thus interpreting Gal 2:1-2 also. The ascent itself builds on 2 Co 12:2-4.

The scene of the judgment and punishment of souls in the fourth and fifth
heavens has its closest parallel in Jewish apocalyptic literature, notably in the *Testament of Abraham* 10 (long recension) and even more closely in the Coptic version of the short recension, which has several details peculiar to it. The author of *Apoc. Paul* is indebted to other traditions, however, for his picture of the three angels who rival one another in whipping the souls forward to judgment (22,5-10). This is clearly an evocation of the Erinyes of Greek mythology. Likewise the toll-collector who is also judge belongs to Babylonian and Hellenistic astrology. The scene is thus the result of popular syncretism.

The third main element of the work, the heavenly journey, is concentrated for the most part in the sixth and seventh heavens. The ascent theme may have been borrowed from Jewish apocalyptic tradition, but its gnostic coloring is obvious in the depiction of the "old man" on the throne in the seventh heaven (Dan 7:13; 1 Enoch 46-47) as a hostile figure who tries to block the gnostic soul's ascent to the Ogdoad and the higher heavens. And the interrogation of Paul also recalls similar dialogues or formulas in other gnostic works (e.g., *1 Apoc. Jas. (V,3)*, *Gos. Mary (BG,1)*, *Gos. Thom. (II,2*, saying 50).

The date and provenance of the document cannot be determined with any certainty. That it comes from gnostic circles with a typical anti-Jewish bias seems assured by the negative view of the deity in the seventh heaven. The portrayal of Paul as exalted even above the other apostles is at home in second-century Gnosticism, especially Valentinianism, and, according to Irenaeus (*Haer. II.30.7*), there was a gnostic tradition of interpreting Paul's experience in 2 Co 12:2-4. Nothing in *Apoc. Paul* demands any later date than the second century for its composition.

THE APOCALYPSE OF PAUL

V 17, 19-24, 9

[The Apocalypse of] Paul

[... ] 18 the road. And [he spoke to him], 1 saying, "[By which] 5 road [shall I go] up to [Jerusalem]?" 1 The little child [replied, saying], 1 "Say your name, so that [I may show] 1 you the road." [The little child] 1 knew [who Paul was]. 10 He wished to make conversation with 1 him through his words [in order that] he 1 might find an excuse for speaking 1 with him.

The little child spoke, 1 saying, "I know 15 who you are, Paul. 1 You are he who was blessed from 1 his mother's womb. For I have [come] 1 to you that you may [go up to Jerusalem] 1 to your fellow [apostles. And] 20 for this reason [you were called. And] 1 I am the [Spirit who ac­companies] 1 you. Let [your mind awaken, 1 Paul], with [...]. 19 For [... ] 1 whole which [... ] 1 among the [principalities and] these authori-
ties [and] archangels and powers and the whole race of demons, [ . . . ] the one that reveals bodies to a soul-seed.’’

And after he brought that speech to an end, he spoke, saying to me, ‘‘Let your mind awake, Paul, and see that this mountain upon which you are standing is the mountain of Jericho, so that you may know the hidden things in those that are visible. Now it is to the twelve apostles that you shall go, for they are elect spirits, and they will greet you.’’ He raised his eyes and saw them greeting him.

Then the Holy [Spirit] who was speaking with [him] caught him up on high to the third heaven, and he passed beyond to the fourth heaven. The [Holy] Spirit spoke to him, saying, ‘‘Look and see your likeness upon the earth.’’ And he looked down and saw those [who were upon] the earth. He stared [and saw] those who were upon the [ . . . . Then he] gazed [down and] saw the [twelve] apostles [at] his right [and] at his left in the creation; and the Spirit was going before them.

But I saw in the fourth heaven according to class — I saw the angels resembling gods, the angels bringing a soul out of the land of the dead. They placed it at the gate of the fourth heaven. And the angels were whipping it. The soul spoke, saying, ‘‘What sin was it that I committed in the world?’’ The toll-collector who dwells in the fourth heaven replied, saying, ‘‘It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds that are in the world of the dead.’’ The soul replied, saying, ‘‘Bring witnesses! Let them [show] you in what body I committed lawless deeds. [Do you wish] to bring a book [to read from]?’’

And the three witnesses came. The first spoke, saying, ‘‘Was I not in the body the second hour? I rose up against you until [you fell] into anger [and rage] and envy.’’ And the second spoke, saying, ‘‘Was I not in the world? And I entered at the fifth hour, and I saw you and desired you. And behold, then, now I charge you with the murders you committed.’’ The third spoke, saying, ‘‘Did I not come to you at the twelfth hour of the day when the sun was about to set? I gave you darkness until you should accomplish your sins.’’ When the soul heard these things, it gazed downward in sorrow. And then it gazed upward. It was cast down. The soul that had been cast down went to [a] body which had been prepared [for it. And] behold [its] witnesses were finished.

[Then I gazed] upward and [saw the] Spirit saying [to me], ‘‘Paul, come! [Proceed toward] me!’’ Then as I went, the gate
open, [and] 1 I went up to the fifth [heaven]. 1 And I saw my fellow apostles 30 [going with me] 22 while the Spirit accompanied us. 1 And I saw a great angel 1 in the fifth heaven holding 1 an iron rod in his 5 hand. There were three other angels with 1 him, and I stared into 1 their faces. But they were rivalling 1 each other, with whips 1 in their hands, goading the 10 souls on to the judgment. 1 But I went with the Spirit 1 and the gate opened for me. 1

Then we went up to the sixth heaven. 1 And I saw my fellow apostles 15 going with me, and the Holy Spirit 1 was leading me before them. 1 And I gazed up on high and saw a 1 great light shining down 1 on the sixth heaven. I spoke, 20 saying to the toll-collector 1 who was in the sixth heaven, “[Open] 1 to me and the [Holy] Spirit [who 1 is] before [me].” He opened [to me].

[Then 1 we went] up to the seventh [heaven 25 and I saw] an old man [... ] 1 light [and 1 whose garment] was white. [His throne], 1 which is in the seventh heaven, 1 [was] brighter than the sun 30 by [seven] times. 23 The old man spoke, saying to [me], 1 “Where are you going, Paul, 1 O blessed one and the one who was 1 set apart from his mother’s womb?” 5 But I looked at the Spirit, 1 and he was nodding his head, saying 1 to me, “Speak with him!” 1 And I replied, saying 1 to the old man, “I am going to the place 10 from which I came.” And 1 the old man responded to me, “Where are you from?” 1 But I replied, saying, 1 “I am going down to the world of 1 the dead in order to lead captive 15 the captivity 1 that was led captive 1 in the captivity of Babylon.” 1 The old man re­plied to me, 1 saying, “How will you be 20 able to get away from me? Look 1 and see the principalities and 1 authorities.” [The] 1 Spirit spoke, saying, “Give him [the] 1 sign that you have, and [he will] 25 open for you.” And then I gave [him] 1 the sign. He turned his face 1 downwards to his creation 1 and to those who are his own authorities. 1

And then the 30 (seventh) heaven opened and we went up to [the] 24 Ogdoad. And I saw the 1 twelve apostles. They 1 greeted me, and we went 1 up to the ninth heaven. I 5 greeted all those who were in the 1 ninth heaven, and we went up 1 to the tenth heaven. And I 1 greeted my fellow spirits. 1

The Apocalypse of Paul
The manuscript names this writing *The Apocalypse of James*. We refer to it here as *The (First) Apocalypse of James* to distinguish it from the next writing (V,4) which the manuscript also entitles *The Apocalypse of James*. Our apocalypse is an excellent example of a "revelation dialogue." The partners in the dialogue are the Lord and James the Lord's brother (though the latter is said to be the Lord's brother only in a purely spiritual sense). In the first part of the writing (24,10-30,11) James addresses questions to the Lord that reflect his anxiety at the suffering soon to overtake both himself and the Lord, and the Lord provides James consolation in terms of standard gnostic teaching about the place of man in the universe. An oblique and very brief reference to the crucifixion in 30,12-13 serves as the turning point in the account. After the reappearance of the Lord, the story is dominated by a series of formulae transmitted to James to enable him to meet the challenges of the hostile powers who will attempt to block his ascent to "the Pre-Existent One" after his martyrdom (32,23-36,1). These formulae represent a dramatized version of texts that appear elsewhere in the context of rites for the dying in forms of Valentinian Gnosticism (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.21.5; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 36.3.1-6). It is worth noting, however, that at least one characteristic line that appears here ("I am an alien, a son of the Father's race") has a close parallel in the *Corpus Hermeticum* (13.3). Other interesting matters taken up in the second part of our apocalypse include the directions concerning the handing on of the teaching in secret (36,13-38,11), the comments about the value of women as disciples (38,15-41,18), the mention of James' rebuke of the twelve disciples (42,20-24), and the relatively lengthy account (now much mutilated) of James' martyrdom at the conclusion of the writing.

The designation of James as "James the Just" (32,2-3; cf. 43,19) indicates contact with Jewish Christian tradition (cf. Hegesippus, in Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.23.4,7; *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, in Jerome, *De viris inl.* 2; *Gos. Thom.*, saying 12). The inclusion of Addai (36,15-24) in the list of figures who will hand on the teaching in secret points to contact with Syria and thereby possibly also to a Semitic form of Christianity (cf. Eusebius, *H.E.* 1.13). Some scholars have argued that numerous other themes in our apocalypse also betray the influence of Jewish Christian theology. But apart from the importance attributed to James the Just there is little in the writing that can with any confidence be attributed to the influence of Jewish Christianity in particular. There is a good possibility, then, that the figure of James was chosen by a circle of Gnostics as a convenient peg on which to hang their teaching.
One reason for the appeal of the figure of James was the fact that he stood outside the circle of twelve disciples and because of his relationship to Jesus (here understood in purely spiritual terms) could be appealed to as the originator of a purer form of Christian teaching than that represented by the twelve. In this connection, the command to hand on the teaching in secret presumably served to explain why it was that Gnosticism appeared to the uninitiated as a relatively late flowering of the religion of Jesus. Our apocalypse, in short, was attempting to present an alternative to the apostolic authority claimed for the teaching of a steadily advancing catholic form of Christianity. It appears, however, that whereas Jerusalem and Judaism are associated with the darker powers of the universe, the twelve (and thus catholic Christianity) move within the more beneficent spheres of the activity of Achamoth, the lesser Sophia.

Another reason for the appeal that the figure of James had for some Gnostics was that it enabled them to make more sense of the history of the first century. The fall of Jerusalem was an event that cried out for explanation. And though it soon seemed natural to attribute the disaster to the treatment of Jesus by the Jews (cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.13; Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.7), it was even more natural to connect the fall of Jerusalem with the treatment meted out to James by Jewish authorities just before the great war with Rome (Hegesippus, in Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.23). A careful Christian scholar was bound to find this disquieting (cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.47). Our apocalypse, however, has no such uneasiness and finds it possible to exploit the role of James for two reasons. First, the difference between the redeemer (the Lord) and the redeemed (James, the prototypical disciple) is significantly less pronounced in Gnosticism (cf. 27,8-10 where James is flatly identified with “Him-who-is”). Consequently, the two figures complement rather than rival one another in ways that are difficult for catholic Christianity to contemplate. Second, the general gnostic view that martyrdom could be (and in the minds of some Gnostics inevitably was) embraced for the wrong reasons made the emergence of resolve in this regard only after a long period of fear and anxiety a perfectly natural expectation. Thus the crucifixion of Jesus and the martyrdom of James are seen as complementary events, both of which are required for the full exemplification of the victory over the powers of darkness. In this connection, the defeat of the archons by James during his ascent to God is presumably connected with the fall of Jerusalem, the dwelling place (according to 25,15-19) of many archons.

A guide to the place of James the Just in early Christianity is provided by a fragment of Clement of Alexandria: “To James the Just and John and Peter the Lord transmitted the *gnosis* after the resurrection. They transmitted it to the other apostles. And the other apostles transmitted it to the seventy ...” (Eusebius, *H.E.* 2.1.4). The passage strongly suggests that there were three main (no doubt overlapping) stages in the development of the image of James: 1) as James the Just, a symbol of Jewish-Christian values; 2) as the recipient of postresurrection revelation in a Gnosticizing milieu; and 3) as a colleague of the apostles of the Lord in a catholicizing milieu. Our apocalypse presumably reflects an interest in James that corresponds to the second main stage of the development of his image.

It should be noted finally that there is some evidence of the direct influence of esoteric Jewish speculation in our apocalypse. For it is only through an
unusual manipulation of numbers and an awareness of the importance of the number 72 in Jewish lore that we can account for the fact that "twelve hebdomads" (12 x 7) amount to "seventy-two heavens (26,2-18).

THE (FIRST) APOCALYPSE OF JAMES

V 24, 10-44, 10

The Apocalypse of James

It is the Lord who spoke with me: 1  "See now the completion of my redemption. 1  I have given you a sign of these things, James, 1  my brother. For not without reason have I called 15 you my brother, although you are not my brother 1 materially. And I am not ignorant 1 concerning you; so that 1 when I give you a sign — know and 1 hear.

"Nothing existed except 20 Him-who-is. He is unnameable 1 and ineffable. 1 I myself also am unnameable, 1 from Him-who-is, just as I have been 1 [given a] number of names — two 25 from Him-who-is. And I, 1 [I am before you. Since you have 1 [asked] concerning femaleness, femaleness existed, 1 but femaleness was 1 not [first]. And 30 [it] prepared for itself powers and gods. 1 But [it did] not exist [when] I came forth, 25 since I am an image of Him-who-is. 1 But I have brought forth the image of [him] 1 so that the sons of Him-who-is 1 might know what things are theirs 5 and what things are alien (to them). Behold, 1 I shall reveal to you everything 1 of this mystery. For they will seize 1 me the day after tomorrow. But my 1 redemption will be near."

James said, "Rabbi, you have said, 1 'They will seize me.' But I, 1 what can I do?" He said to me, 1 "Fear not, James. 1 You too will they seize. 15 But leave Jerusalem. 1 For it is she who always gives the cup of bitterness 1 to the sons 1 of light. She is a dwelling place 1 of a great number of archons. 20 But your redemption will be preserved 1 from them. So that 1 you may understand who they are [and] 1 what kinds they are, you will [. . .]. 1 And listen. They [are] not [. . .] 25 but [archons . . .]. 1 These twelve 1 [. . .] down [. . .] 29 archons [. . .] 26 upon his own hebdomad."

James said, "Rabbi, are there then 1 twelve hebdomads 1 and not seven as 5 there are in the scriptures?" 1 The Lord said, "James, he who spoke 1 concerning this scripture had a limited understanding. 1 I, however, shall reveal to you 1 what has come forth from him 10 who has no number. I shall give a sign concerning their 1 number. As for what has
come forth from him who has no measure, I shall give a sign concerning their measure."

James said, "Rabbi, behold then, I have received their number. There are seventy-two measures!" The Lord said, "These are the seventy-two heavens, which are their subordinates. These are the powers of all their might; and they were established by them; and these are they who were distributed everywhere, existing under the authority of the twelve archons. The inferior power among them [brought forth] for itself angels [and] unnumbered hosts. Him-who-is, however, has been given... Him-who-is... they are unnumbered. If you want to give them a number now, you [will] not be able to (do so) until you cast away from yourself blind thought, this bond of flesh which encircles you. And then you will reach Him-who-is. And you will no longer be James; rather you are the One-who-is. And all those who are unnumbered will all have been named."

(James said, "Then,) Rabbi, in what way shall I reach Him-who-is, since all these powers and these hosts are armed against me?" He said to me, "These powers are not armed against you specifically, but are armed against another. It is against me that they are armed. And they are armed with other [powers]. But they are armed against me [in] judgment. They did not give... to me in it... through them... In this place... suffering, I shall... He will... and I shall not rebuke them. But there shall be within me a silence and a hidden mystery. But I am fainthearted before their anger."

James said, "Rabbi, if they arm themselves against you, then is there no blame?

You have come with knowledge,
that you might rebuke their forgetfulness.
You have come with recollection,
that you might rebuke their ignorance.

But I was concerned because of you.

For you descended into a great ignorance,
but you have not been defiled by anything in it.
For you descended into a great mindlessness,
and your recollection remained.

You walked in mud,
and your garments were not soiled,
and you have not been buried \(1^\) in their filth, and \(20^\) you have not been caught.

And I was \(1^\) not like them, but I clothed myself with everything \(1^\) of theirs.

There is in me \(1^\) forgetfulness, yet I \(1^\) remember things that are not theirs. \(25^\)
There is in me \([...], \)
and I am in their \(1^\) \([...].\)

\([...]\) knowledge \(1^\) \([...]\) not in their sufferings \(1^\) \([...].\) But I have become afraid \(30^\) [before them], since they rule. For what \(29^\) will they do? What will I be able \(1^\) to say? Or what word will I be able \(1^\) to say that I may escape them?’’ \(1^\)

The Lord said, ‘‘James, I praise \(5^\) your understanding and your fear. \(1^\) If you continue to be distressed, \(1^\) do not be concerned for anything else \(1^\) except your redemption. \(1^\) For behold, I shall complete this destiny \(10^\) upon this earth as \(1^\) I have said from the heavens. \(1^\) And I shall reveal to you \(1^\) your redemption.’’

James said, ‘‘Rabbi, how, after these things, \(15^\) will you appear to us again? \(1^\) After they seize you, \(1^\) and you complete this destiny, \(1^\) you will go up to Him- \(1^\) who-is.’’ The Lord said, ‘‘James, \(20^\) after these things I shall reveal to you \(1^\) everything, not for your sake \(1^\) alone but for the sake of [the] \(1^\) unbelief of men, \(1^\) so that [faith] may \(25^\) exist in them. \(1^\) For [a] multitude will [attain] \(1^\) to faith [and] \(1^\) they will increase [in \(\ldots).\] \(30^\) And after this I shall appear \(1^\) for a reproof to the archons. And I shall \(1^\) reveal to them that \(1^\) he cannot be seized. If they \(5^\) seize him, then \(1^\) he will overpower each of them. \(1^\) But now I shall go. Remember \(1^\) the things I have spoken and let them \(1^\) go up before you.’’ \(10^\)

James said, ‘‘Lord, I shall hasten \(1^\) as you have said.’’ \(1^\) The Lord said farewell to him and fulfilled \(1^\) what was fitting.

When James \(1^\) heard of his sufferings \(15^\) and was much distressed, \(1^\) they awaited the sign \(1^\) of his coming. And he came after \(1^\) several days. And James \(1^\) was walking upon the mountain, \(20^\) which is called ‘‘Gaugelan,’’ \(1^\) with his disciples, \(1^\) who listened to him \(1^\) [because they had been distressed], and he was \(1^\) \([...]\) a comforter, \(25^\) [saying], ‘‘This is \(1^\) \([...]\) the (or: a) second \([...].\)’’ \(1^\) Then the crowd dispersed, \(1^\) but James remained \(1^\) \([...]\) prayer \(30^\) \([...],\) as \(31^\) was his custom. \(1^\)

And the Lord appeared to him. \(1^\) Then he stopped (his) prayer \(1^\) and embraced him. He kissed \(5^\) him, saying, ‘‘Rabbi, \(1^\) I have found you! I
have heard of your sufferings, which you endured. And I have been much distressed. My compassion you know. Therefore, on reflection, I was wishing that I would not see this people. They must be judged for these things that they have done. For these things that they have done are contrary to what is fitting.'

The Lord said, "James, do not be concerned for me or for this people. I am he who was within me. Never have I suffered in any way, nor have I been distressed. And this people has done me no harm. But this (people) existed as a type of the archons, and it deserved to be destroyed through them. But [ ... ] the archons, [ ... ] who (or: which) has [ ... ] but since it (fem.) [ ... ] angry with [ ... ] The] just [ ... ] is his servant. Therefore your name is 'James the Just.' You see how you will become sober when you see me. And you stopped this prayer. Now since you are a just man of God, you have embraced me and kissed me. Truly I say to you that you have stirred up great anger and wrath against yourself. But (this has happened) so that these others might come to be."

But James was timid (and) wept. And he was very distressed. And they both sat down upon a rock. The Lord said to him, "James, thus you will undergo these sufferings. But do not be sad. For the flesh is weak. It will receive what has been ordained for it. But as for you, do not be [timid] or afraid."

[Now] when James heard these things, he wiped away [the] tears in [his eyes] and very bitter (?) which is ... The Lord [said] to [him, "James], behold, I shall reveal to you your redemption. When [you] are seized, and you undergo these sufferings, a multitude will arm themselves against you that they may seize you. And in particular three of them will seize you — they who sit (there) as toll collectors. Not only do they demand toll, but they also take away souls by theft. When you come into their power, one of them who is their guard will say to you, 'Who are you or where are you from?' You are to say to him, 'I am a son, and I am from the Father.' He will say to you, 'What sort of son are you, and to what father do you belong?' You are to say to him, 'I am from the Pre-existent Father, and a son in the Pre-existent One.' [When he says] to you, [ ... ], you are to [say to him, ...] in the [ ... ] that I might ...

"[ ... 34 of] alien things?" You are to say to him, 'They are not entirely alien, but they are from Achamoth, who is the female. And these she produced as she brought down the race from the Pre-existent One. So then they are not alien, but they are ours. They are..."
indeed ours because she who \(^1\) is mistress of them is from \(^1\) the Pre-existent One. \(^1\) At the same time they are alien because \(^1\) the Pre-existent One did not \(^1\) have intercourse with her, when she \(^15\) produced them.‘ When he also says to you, \(^1\) “Where will you go?,” you are to \(^1\) say to him, ‘To the place from which I have come, \(^1\) there shall I return.’ \(^1\) And if you say these things, you will \(^20\) escape their attacks.

“But when \(^1\) you come to \(^1\) [these] three detainers \(^1\) [who] take away souls by \(^1\) theft in that place \(^25\) [....] these. You \(^1\) [....] a vessel \(^1\) [....] much more than \([....]\) \(^{35}\) of the one (fem.) whom \(^1\) you [....] for [....] \(^1\) her root. You \(^1\) too will \(^5\) be sober [....]. But I shall call \(^1\) [upon] the imperishable knowledge, \(^1\) which is Sophia who \(^1\) is in the Father (and) who is the mother \(^1\) of Achamoth. \(^{10}\) Achamoth had no father nor \(^1\) male consort, but \(^1\) she is female from a \(^1\) female. She produced you \(^1\) (pl.) \(^1\) without a male, since she was alone \(^1\) (and) in ignorance as to what \(^1\) [lives through] her mother because she thought \(^1\) that she alone existed. \(^1\) But [I] shall cry out \(^1\) to her mother. And then \(^20\) they will fall into confusion (and) will \(^1\) blame their \(^1\) root and the race \([of]\) \(^1\) their mother. [But] you \(^1\) will go up to \([what is]\) \(^{25}\) yours [....] \(^1\) you will [....] \(^{36}\) the [Pre-existent One].

“[They are \(^1\) a] type [of the] twelve \(^1\) disciples and [the] twelve \(^1\) pairs, [....] \(^5\) Achamoth, which is \(^1\) translated ‘Sophia.’ \(^1\) And who I myself am, \(^1\) and (who) the imperishable Sophia (is) \(^1\) through whom you will be redeemed, \(^{10}\) and (who are) all the sons of Him-who- \(^1\) is — these things they have known \(^1\) and have hidden within \(^1\) them. You are to hide \([these things]\) within you, \(^1\) and you are to keep silence. \(^{15}\) But you are to reveal them to \(^1\) Addai. When you [depart], \(^1\) immediately war will be [made] \(^1\) with this land. [Weep], \(^1\) then, for him who dwells in Jerusalem. \(^{20}\) But let Addai take these things \(^1\) to heart. In the tenth \(^1\) year let Addai sit \(^1\) and write them down. \(^1\) And when he writes them down \(^{25}\) [....] and they are to give them \(^1\) [....] he has the \([....]\) \(^{376}\) he is [called] \(^1\) Levi. Then he is to bring \(^1\) [....] word \(^1\) [....] from \(^{10}\) [what I] said earlier \(^1\) [....] a woman \(^1\) [....] Jerusalem in her \([....]\) and he begets \(^1\) [two] sons through her. \(^{15}\) [They are to] inherit these things \(^1\) [and] the understanding of him who \(^1\) [....] exalts. And they are to receive \(^1\) [....] through him from his \(^1\) intellect. Now, the younger of them \(^{20}\) is greater. And \(^1\) may these things remain \(^1\) hidden in him until [he] \(^1\) comes to the age of \(^1\) seventeen years \([....]\) \(^{383}\) beginning \([....]\) \(^5\) through [them]. They will pursue \(^1\) him exceedingly, since [they are] from \(^1\) his \([....]\) companions. He will be \(^1\) proclaimed [through] them, \(^1\) and [they will] proclaim this word. \(^{10}\) [Then he will become] \(^1\) a seed of \([....]\).’’ \(^1\)
James said, "[I am] satisfied [...]." And they are [...] my soul. Yet [another thing]: I ask of you: who are the [seven] women who have [been] your disciples? And behold, all women bless you. I am amazed how [powerless] vessels have become strong by a perception which is in them." [The Lord] said, "You [...] well [...] 393 a spirit [of ...], a [spirit] of thought, [a spirit] of counsel of [a ...], a spirit [ ... , a] spirit of knowledge [...]." When we had passed through [the breath] of 10 [this] archon who is [named] Adonaios [...] him and [...] he was ignorant [...] when I came forth from him, 15 [he] remembered that I am [a] son of his. He was gracious [to me] at that time as his son. And then, before I appeared here, [he] cast them among [this] people. And from the [place] of heaven the prophets [...]."

James [said], "Rabbi, [...]." J [ ...] all together [...] in them especially [...]." The Lord said, "[James], I 10 praise [you ...]." For cast away from [you the] 15 cup, which is bitterness. For some from [...] set themselves against you. For [you have begun] to understand [their roots] from beginning to end. Cast away from yourself all lawlessness. And beware lest they envy you. When you speak these words of this [perception], encourage these [four]: Salome and Mariam [and Martha and Arsinoe ...]. Since he takes some [ ...]to me he is [...] burnt offerings and [...] But I 10 [...] not in this way; but [...] first-fruits of the [...] upward [...] so that the power [of God might] appear. The perishable has [gone up] to the imperishable and the female element has attained to this male element."

James said, 20 "Rabbi, into these three (things), then, has their been cast. For they have been reviled, [and they have been] persecuted [...]. Behold everything [...] from anyone [...]. For you have received [...] of 10 knowledge. [And ...] that what is the [...] 1 go [...] you will [find ...]. But I shall go [forth] 15 and shall reveal that they believed in you [that they may] be content with their [blessing] and salvation, and this revelation may come to pass." And he went at that time [immediately] and rebuked the twelve, and cast [out] of them contentment [concerning the] way of knowledge [...].

And the majority of them when they saw, the messenger took in [...]. The others [...] said, "[...] 14 him from this earth. For [he is] not [worthy] of life." These, then, [were]
afraid. They arose, saying, "We have no part in this blood, for a just man will perish through injustice." James departed so that [.] 446 look [.] for we (?) [.] him.

The Apocalypse of James
THE (SECOND) APOCALYPSE OF JAMES (V,4)

Introduced and translated by
CHARLES W. HEDRICK

Edited by
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The fourth tractate in Codex V has been given the modern title The (Second) Apocalypse of James in order to distinguish it from the preceding tractate, since both documents have the same ancient title: The Apocalypse of James. The twenty pages comprising the tractate are preserved in a fragmentary state. The literary form is difficult to describe. The title of the text calls it an apocalypse, and the first line describes it as a discourse. In the sense that James relates a revelation received from the resurrected Jesus, it may be called a revelation discourse. However, its actual structure is cast in the form of a two-part report to Theuda, the father of James, by Mareim, a priest and relative of Theuda, who apparently was present at the stoning of James.

The tractate contains at least four sections artistically arranged. Because of their balance and stylized form they have been described as "harmonic prose" possessing a "hymnic" quality. Three of these units are aretalogies. One (49,5-15) is a series of self-assertions by the resurrected Jesus in the "I am" style. Another (58,2-20) is a series of predications about the resurrected Jesus made by James in the third person (i.e., "he is"). In a further aretalogy (55,15-56,13) the resurrected Jesus describes James' special role in the second person (i.e., "you are"). The entire description in the third aretalogy suggests that James is intended to perform the function of gnostic redeemer.

The fourth unit (62,16-63,29) is a prayer attributed to James. Its present setting requires that one read it as the prayer of a martyr shortly before death. However, it is by no means certain that the present setting of the prayer was its original setting. Apart from its context, it has the character of a prayer that one might pray if one were facing some future period of persecution or trial. The request in 62,21-22 suggests that there was a prospect of continued existence in the world. The material in 63,23-24 speaks of something other than a painful death, already mentioned in 63,5-6, and in fact suggests trials and tribulations such as one might anticipate in one's daily experience.

The tractate as a whole is clearly gnostic in character, yet it shows remarkable restraint in treating usual gnostic themes. Nor can it be identified with any of the known gnostic systems of the second century. On the other hand, the author has made extensive use of Jewish-Christian traditions. James, who held a position of special prominence in Jewish-Christian circles, is regarded as the possessor of a special revelation from Jesus and is assigned a role in the gnostic tradition that rivals, and perhaps exceeds, that of Peter in the canonical tradition. For example,
James is the "escort" who guides the Gnostic through the door of the heavenly kingdom and even rewards him (55,6-14; cf. 55,15-56,13). The description is similar to Peter's charge as the keeper of the keys of heaven (Mt 16:19).

As to the date and place of composition, little can be said with certainty. Because of the basic Jewish-Christian traditions out of which the tractate is composed, it is probable that its origin is to be associated with Jewish-Christian circles. The absence of allusions to the later developed gnostic systems, and the almost total absence of allusions to the New Testament tradition suggest an early date for the origin of the tractate.

The presence and order of the two James apocalypses in Codex V are undoubtedly due to deliberate scribal organization. The two apocalypses stress different aspects of the James tradition and actually complement one another. The setting of 1 Apoc. Jas. emphasizes the period prior to the suffering of James, while 2 Apoc. Jas. describes his suffering and death in line with the predictions in 1 Apoc. Jas.

THE (SECOND) APOCALYPSE OF JAMES

V 44, 11-63, 32

The Apocalypse 1
of [James] 1

This is [the] discourse that James 1 [the] Just spoke 15 in Jerusalem, [which] 1 Mareim, one [of] the priests, 1 wrote. He had told it to 1 Theuda, the father of the Just One, 1 since he was a relative 20 of his. He said, 1 "[Hasten!] Come with 1 [Mary], your wife and 1 your relatives [...] 45 therefore [...] 5 of this [...] 1 to [him, he will] understand. 1 For behold, a multitude 10 are disturbed over 1 his [...], and they are greatly 1 angry [at him. ...] 1 and they pray [...]. 15 For 1 [he would] often say these words 1 and others 1 also.

"He used to speak these words 1 while the multitude of people 20 were seated. But (on this occasion) he entered 1 and did <not> sit down 1 in the place, as was his custom. 1 Rather he sat above 1 the fifth flight of steps, [which] 25 is (highly) esteemed, while all our people [...] 27 the words [...].

"[...]. 46 I am he who 1 received revelation from 1 the Pleroma [of] Imperishability. 1 (I am) he who was first summoned 10 by him who is great, and 1 who obeyed the [Lord] — 1 he who passed [through] 1 the [worlds ...] 1 he who [...] 15 stripped [himself and] 1 went about naked, 1 he who was found in a 1 perishable (state), though he was about to be brought 1 up into imperishability. — 20 This Lord who
is present; [came] as a son who sees, and as a brother [was he sought]. He will come to [ . . . ] produced him because [ . . . ] and he unites [ . . . ] make him free [ . . . ] in [ . . . ] he who came [to . . . ].

"Now again am I rich in knowledge [and] I have a unique understanding, which was produced only from above and the [ . . . ] comes from a [ . . . ]. I am the [ . . . ] whom I knew. That which was revealed to me was hidden from everyone and shall (only) be revealed through him. These two who see I ( . . . ) (and) they have already proclaimed through these [words]: "He shall be judged with the [unrighteous]." He who lived [without] blasphemy died by means of [blasphemy]. He who was cast out they [ . . . ].

"[ . . . 48] the] flesh [and] it is by knowledge that I shall come forth from the [flesh]. I am surely dying, but it is in life that I shall be found. I entered in order that they might judge [ . . . ] I shall come forth [in . . . ] judge [ . . . I do] not bring blame against the servants of his [ . . . ] I hasten to make them free and want to take them above him who wants to rule over them. If they are helped, I am the brother in secret, who prayed to the Father [until he . . . ] in [ . . . ] 49 reign: [ . . . imperishability . . . ] first in [ . . . ].

I [am the] first [son] who was begotten. — He will destroy the dominion of [them] all. — I am the beloved. I am the righteous one. I am the son of [the Father].

I speak even as [I] heard. I command even as I [received] the order. I show you (pl.) even as I have [found].

Behold, I speak in order that I may come forth. Pay attention to me in order that you may see me!

"If I have come into existence, who then am I? For I did [not] come as I am, nor would I have appeared as I am. For I used to exist for a brief period of time . . . ."

"Once when I was sitting deliberating, [he] opened [the] door. That one whom you hated and persecuted came in to me. He said to me, "Hail, my brother; my brother, hail." As I raised my [face] to stare at him, (my) mother said to me, "Do not be frightened, my son, because he said 'My brother' to you (sg.). For you (pl.) were nourished with this same milk. Because of this he calls me 'My
mother.' For he is not a stranger to us. He is your [step-brother ...]."

"="[...] 51 these words [...] 5 great [...] I shall [find] them, and [they shall come] I forth. [However], I am the stranger, and they have no knowledge of me in [their] thoughts, 10 for they know me in [this place]. But it was fitting that others know through you.

"="(You are) the one to whom I say: 15 Hear and understand — for a multitude, when they hear, will be slow witted. But you, understand as I shall be able to tell you. Your father 20 is not my father. But my father has become a father to [you].

"="This virgin about whom you hear — this is how [...] 27 virgin [...] 52 namely, the virgin. [...] how [...] to me for [...] to know [...] not as [...] whom I [...]. For this one (masc.) [...] to him, and this also is profitable for you. Your father, whom you consider to be [rich], shall grant that you inherit all these (things) that you see.

"="I proclaim to you to tell you 15 these (words) that I shall speak. When you hear, therefore, open your ears and understand and walk (accordingly)! It is because of you that they pass by, activated by that one who is glorious. And if they want to make a disturbance and (seize) possession [...] 53 he began [...] not, nor those who are [coming], who were sent forth [by] him to make this present [creation]. 5

After [these things, when he] is ashamed, he shall be disturbed that his labor, which is far from the aeons, is nothing. And his inheritance, which he boasted to be great, shall appear small. And his gifts are not blessings. His promises are evil schemes. For you are not an (instrument) of his compassion, but it is through you that he does violence. He wants to do injustice to us, and will exercise dominion for a time allotted to him.

"="But I understand and know the Father who has compassion. He was not given an inheritance that was unlimited, [nor] does it (his inheritance) have a (limited) number of days, but it is as [the] eternal [day ...] 30 it is [...]. 54 perceive [...]. And he used [...]. For in fact he is not one (come) from [them], (and) because of this he is despised. Because of this he [boasts], so that he may not be reproved. For because of this he is superior to those who are below, those by whom you were looked down upon. After he imprisoned those from [the] Father, he seized them and fashioned them to resemble himself. And it is with him that they exist.

"="I saw from the height those (things) that happened, and I have
explained 1 how they happened. 1 They were visited while they 20 were in another form, and, 1 while I was watching, 1 [they] came to know <me> as I am, 1 through those whom I know. 1

""""Now before those (things) 25 [have happened] they will make a 1 [...] I know 1 [how] they attempted 1 [to come] down to this place 55 [that] he might approach [...] 1 the small children, [but 1 I] wish to reveal 1 through you and the [Spirit 5 of Power], in order that he might reveal 1 [to those] who are yours. And 1 those who wish to enter, 1 and who seek to walk in the way that is 10 before the door, 1 open the good door through you. And they 1 follow you; they enter 1 [and you] escort them inside, and give a reward 1 to each one who is ready for it. 15

For you are not the redeemer 1
nor a helper of strangers. 1
You are an illuminator 1 and a redeemer 1
of those who are mine,
and now 20 of those who are yours.
You shall 1 reveal (to them);
you shall bring good 1 among them all.

You [they shall] 1 admire
because of every powerful (deed). 1
You are he whom the heavens 25 bless.
You 1 he shall envy,
he [who has] 1 called himself your [Lord]. 1
I am the [...] 56
[those who] are instructed in these
(things) with [you]. 1

For your sake
they will be told 1 [these (things)],
and will come to rest. 1
For your sake
they will reign,
[and will] 5 become kings.
For [your] sake 1
they will have pity
on whomever they pity. 1

For just as 1 you are first
having clothed 1 yourself,
you are also the 10 first who will strip himself, 1
and you shall become 1 as you were 1 before you were stripped.’’ 1

‘‘And he kissed 15 my mouth. He took hold of me, saying, 1 ‘‘My beloved! 1 Behold, I shall reveal 1 to you those (things) that (neither) 1 [the] heavens nor their archons 20 have known. Behold, 1 I shall reveal to you 1 those (things) that he did not know, 1 he who [boasted, ‘‘...’’ 26 there is no] 57 other except me. Am I not alive? 1 Because I am a father, 1 [do] I [not have power] for everything?’’ 1 Behold, I shall reveal to you 5 everything, my beloved. 1 [Understand] and know them 1 [that] you may come forth just as 1 I am. Behold, 1 I [shall] reveal to you him who 10 [is hidden]. But now, stretch out your 1 [hand]. Now, take hold of me.’’ 1 [And] then I stretched out my 1 hands and I did not find him 1 as I thought (he would be). But 15 afterward I heard him 1 saying, ‘‘Understand and 1 take hold of me.’’ Then I understood, 1 and I was afraid. And 1 I was exceedingly joyful. 20

‘‘Therefore, I tell 1 you (pl.), judges, you 1 have been judged. And you 1 did not spare, but you were spared. 1 Be sober and [...] 58 you did not [know]. 1

He was that one 1 whom he who created 1 the heaven and the earth, 5 and dwelled in it, 1 did not see.
He was [this one who] 1 is the life.
He 1 was the light.
He 1 was that one who will come to be. 10

And again he shall provide

[an] 1 end for what 1 has begun
and a beginning 1 for what is about to be ended. 1
He was the Holy Spirit 15 and the Invisible One, 1 who did not descend 1 upon the earth.
He was 1 the virgin, and that which 1 he wishes happens 20 to him.
I saw 1 that he was naked, 1 and there was no garment clothing 1 him.
That which he wills 1 happens to him [...] 59

‘‘[Renounce] this difficult way, 1 which is (so) variable, 1 [and] walk in accordance with him who desires 1 [that] you become free men 5 [with] me, after you have passed above 1 every [dominion]. For he will not [judge] (you) 1 for those (things) that you did, 1 but will have mercy on you. 1 For (it is) not you that did them, but it is 10 [your] Lord (that did them). [He was not] 1 a wrathful one, but he was a kind Father. 1

‘‘But you have judged [yourselves], 1 and because of this you will re-
main in their fetters. You have oppressed yourselves, and you will repent, (but) you will not profit at all. Behold him who speaks and seek him who is silent. Know him who came to this place, and understand him who went forth (from it). I am the Just One, and I do not judge. I am not a master, then, but I am a helper. He was cast out before he stretched out his hand. I [...] 60 and he allows me to hear. And play your trumpets, your flutes and your harps [of this house]. The Lord has taken you captive from the Lord, having closed your ears, that they may not hear the sound of my word. Yet you will be able to pay heed in your hearts, [and] you will call me "the Just One." Therefore, I tell you: Behold, I gave you your house, which you say that God has made — that (house) in which he promised to give you an inheritance through it. This (house) I shall doom to destruction and derision of those who are in ignorance. For behold, those who judge deliberate [...] 61

"[On] that day all the [people] and the crowd were disturbed, and they showed that they had not been persuaded. And he arose and went forth speaking in this manner. And he entered (again) on that same day and spoke a few hours. And I was with the priests and revealed nothing of the relationship, since all of them were saying with one voice, ‘Come, let us stone the Just One.’ And they arose, saying, ‘Yes, let us kill this man, that he may be taken from our midst. For he will be of no use to us.’

And they were there and found him standing beside the columns of the temple beside the mighty corner stone. And they decided to throw him down from the height, and they cast him down. And they [...] they [...] 62 They seized him and [struck] him as they dragged him upon the ground. They stretched him out, and placed a stone on his abdomen. They all placed their feet on him, saying, ‘You have erred!’

Again they raised him up, since he was alive, and made him dig a hole. They made him stand in it. After having covered him up to his abdomen, they stoned him in this manner.

And he stretched out his hands and said this prayer — not that (one) which it is his custom to say:

‘My God and my Father, who saved me from this dead hope, who made me alive through a mystery of what he wills,
do not let these days of this world be prolonged for me, but the day of your (sg.) [light ...] remains in [...] 63 salvation.

Deliver me from this [place of] sojourn!
Do not let your grace be left behind in me,
but may your grace become pure!  
Save me from an evil death!
Bring me from a tomb alive,
because your grace – love – is alive in me to accomplish a work of fullness!  
Save me from sinful flesh,
because I trusted in you with all my strength!
Because you are the life of the life,
save me from a humiliating enemy!
Do not give me into the hand of a judge who is severe with sin!
Forgive me all my debts of the days (of my life)!
Because I am alive in you, your grace is alive in me.  
I have renounced everyone,
but you I have confessed.  
Save me from evil affliction!
But now is the [time] and the hour.
O Holy [Spirit], send [me] salvation [...] the light [...]  
the light [...] in a power [...].’  

“After he [spoke, he] fell silent [...] word [...] afterward [...] the discourse [...].”
THE APOCALYPSE OF ADAM (V,5)

Introduced and translated by
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Edited by
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The Apocalypse of Adam is a revelation received by Adam from three heavenly visitors and narrated by him to his son Seth. He explains the loss of saving knowledge by himself and Eve (the fall), its transmission to Seth and his descendants, and its preservation, despite the attempts of the creator-god to destroy mankind by flood and by fire, until the third coming of a savior figure, the "Illuminator." The latter is persecuted by the powers of the world but will ultimately triumph over them. At the mention of his coming there is a long hymnic passage (77,27-83,4), which may be an interpolation into an original apocalypse, in which thirteen false or inadequate explanations of his origin are contrasted with a true one by the "generation without a king," i.e., the Gnostics. This unusual passage is a remarkable example of gnostic syncretism.

In terms of literary form the work embodies a whole succession of the traditional revelation devices. First, the revelation comes to Adam in a dream vision (65,24-66,23) in which it is not clearly stated that he sees the events of the future but perhaps is merely told them. Secondly, Adam's narration to Seth takes the form of a secret traditio from father to son (85,19-22). Thirdly, though not written in a book, these words are hidden on a high mountain (85,3-11). Finally, since Adam's revelation takes place just before his death, the work assumes the form of a testament. Though it is clearly dependent on certain episodes of the Genesis story which are often found in gnostic revelation literature, Apoc. Adam does not follow closely the text of Genesis as do Hyp. Arch. (II,4) and Ap. John (II,1), for example.

The most notable feature of this work is the absence of any explicit or clear borrowings from the Christian tradition. This has led several interpreters to see in it a witness to a non-Christian Gnosticism which contains an already well developed redeemer myth. On the other hand, its close dependence on Jewish apocalyptic tradition suggests that it may represent a transitional stage in an evolution from Jewish to gnostic apocalyptic. In this case the document may be a very early one, perhaps first or second century C.E., but no clear indications of its date have been perceived. Apoc. Adam is a Sethian work in the sense that Seth and his posterity are the tradents of the saving knowledge; it does not have any uniquely close affinities to the description of the Sethians found in Hippolytus (Ref. V.19-21) or Epiphanius (Pan. 39). Within the Nag Hammadi collection it has a great deal in common with Gos. Eg. (III,2), which seems to suppose a christianized version of the story. Using as a key the three sets of angel names, which
are not common in the gnostic writings (Abrasax, Sablo, and Gamaliel, 75,22-23; Micheu, Michar, and Mnesinous, 84,5-6; Iesseus Mazareus Iessedekeus, 85,30-31), we find that Apoc. Adam is related to The Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex, to Gos. Eg., to Zostrianos (VIII,1), and to Trim. Prot. (XIII,1). In addition several of these works share an interest in the personage of Seth and some concern with the interpretation of baptism, thus reflecting at least a remote connection with (Jewish) baptist circles.

There are references to “apocalypses of Adam” in the writings of the heresiologist Epiphanius (4th cent. C.E.) and Manichaean writings refer to “an apocalypse of Adam,” but no direct connection with this tractate can be made in either case.

(George W. MacRae)

The possibility that the third illuminator, described in 76,8-77,18, might be Christ, has continued to be discussed. Some who favor the identification with Christ have argued that the vagueness of the allusions is precisely what one would expect in an apocalyptic work. The apocalyptic tradition, however, did not prevent the writer from being rather precise about the flood. Also, the details that do come through in the illuminator’s description only partly resemble the traditional details about Christ: He will come in great glory, bring the knowledge of the eternal God, and perform signs and wonders. The god of the powers will become angry. At that point the glory will withdraw. The flesh of the man, who was the illuminator when he had the glory, will be punished. We are not told the form of the punishment or whether it ended in death. Nor are we told of a subsequent resurrection. Thus the description is that of a charismatic figure who ran afoul of the authorities and was punished. It is difficult to see any compelling reason to identify this figure with Christ.

Seams in the text have invited those interested in source analysis. In addition to the suggestion, noted above, that the long hymnic passage (13 Kingdoms) was originally independent, two other proposals should be mentioned. One is that the tractate originally ended at 84,3 and that the remainder was added later (it seems to have its own theme – opposition to water baptism). The other is that the tractate is the result of the combining of two separate source documents by a redactor, who also made some contributions of his own. One can get a sense of the basis for the latter theory by looking at the following passages, which, it is contended, are the beginning sections of each of the sources: (A) 64,6-65,23; 66,12-67,11; (B) 65,24-66,12; 67,12-67,21.

(Douglas M. Parrott)
The revelation which Adam taught his son Seth in the seven hundredth year, saying, \(^5\) "Listen to my words, my son Seth. When god had created me out of the earth along with Eve your mother, I went about with her in a glory which she had seen in the aeon from which we had come forth. She taught me a word of knowledge of the eternal god. And we resembled the great eternal angels, for we were higher than the god who had created us and the powers with him, whom we did not know.\(^20\)

"Then god, the ruler of the aeons and the powers, divided us in wrath. Then we became two aeons. And the glory in our heart(s) left us, me and your mother Eve, along with the first knowledge that breathed within us. And it (glory) fled from us; it entered into \([\ldots]\) great \([\ldots]\) which (fem.) \(65\) [had come] forth, not from this aeon from which [we had] come forth, I and Eve your mother. But it (knowledge) entered into the seed of great aeons. For this reason myself have called you by the name of that man who is the seed of the great generation or from whom (it comes). After those days the eternal knowledge of the God of truth withdrew from me and your mother Eve. Since that time we learned about dead things, like men. Then we recognized the god who had created us. For we were not strangers to his powers. And we served him in fear and slavery. And after these (events) we became darkened in our heart(s). Now I slept in the thought of my heart.\(^1\)

"And I saw three men before me whose likeness I was unable to recognize, since they were not the powers of the god who had created us. They surpassed \([\ldots]\) glory, and \([\ldots]\) men \([\ldots]\) 66 saying to me, 'Arise, Adam, from the sleep of death, and hear about the aeon and the seed of that man to whom life has come, who came from you and from Eve, your wife.'\(^1\)

"When I had heard these words from the great men who were standing before me, then we sighed, I and Eve, in our heart(s). And the Lord, the god who had created us, stood before us. He said to us, 'Adam, why were you (pl.) sighing in your heart? Do you not know that I am the god who created you? And I breathed into you
a spirit of life as a living soul.' Then darkness came upon our 25 eyes.

"Then the god, who created us, created a son from himself [and] Eve, [your mother], for [... 67 in] the thought of my [...]. I knew a sweet desire for your mother. Then 5 the vigor of our eternal knowledge was destroyed in us, and weakness pursued us. 10 Therefore the days of our life became few. For I knew that I had come under the authority of death.

"Now then, 15 my son Seth, I will reveal to you the things which those men whom I saw before me at first revealed to me: after I have completed the times of this generation 25 and [the] years of [the generation] have been accomplished, [then ...] slave [...]. (p. 68 blank) 692

"For rain-showers of god the almighty will be poured forth [so that] he might destroy all flesh of god the almighty, so that he might destroy all flesh 1 from the earth on account of the things that it seeks after, along with those from the seed of the men to whom passed the life of 15 the knowledge, which came from me [and] Eve, your mother. For they were strangers to him. Afterwards great angels will come on high clouds, who will bring those men into the place where the spirit of life dwells [...:] 70 glory [...:] there, [...] come from heaven to earth. [Then] the whole [multitude] of flesh will be left behind in the [waters].

"Then god will rest from his wrath. And he will cast his power upon the waters, and [he will] give power to his sons and their wives by means of the ark along with [the] animals, whichever he pleased, and the birds of heaven, which he called and released upon the earth. And god will say to Noah - whom the generations will call Deucalion -, 'Behold, I have protected you in the ark along with your wife and your sons and their wives and their animals and the birds of [heaven], which you called and released upon the earth]. 71 Therefore I will give the [earth] to you - you and your sons. In kingly fashion you will rule over it - you and your sons. And no seed will come from you of the men who will not stand in my presence in another glory.'

"Then they will become as the cloud of the great light. Those men will come who have been cast forth from the knowledge of the great aeons and the angels. They will stand 15 before Noah and the aeons. And god will say to Noah, 'Why have you departed from what I told you? You have created another generation so that you might scorn my power.' Then Noah will say, 'I shall testify before
your might that the generation of these men did not come from me nor from my sons. ...] knowledge.

"And [he] will those men and bring them into their proper land and build them a holy dwelling-place. And they will be called by that name and dwell there six hundred years in a knowledge of imperishability. And angels of the great light will dwell with them. No foul deed will dwell in their heart(s), but only the knowledge of god. "

"Then Noah will divide the whole earth among his sons, Ham and Japheth and Shem. He will say to them, 'My sons, listen to my words. Behold, I have divided the earth among you. But serve him in fear and slavery all the days of your life. Let not your seed depart from the face of god the almighty. I and your [73 son of Noah, 'My seed will be] pleasing before you and before your power. Seal it by your strong hand with fear and commandment, so that the whole seed which came forth from me may not be inclined away from you and god the almighty, but it will serve in humility and fear of its knowledge.'

"Then others from the seed of Ham and Japheth will come, four hundred thousand men, and enter into another land and sojourn with those men who came forth from the great eternal knowledge. For the shadow of their power will protect those who have sojourned with them from every evil thing and every unclean desire. Then the seed of Ham and Japheth will form twelve kingdoms, and their seed also will enter into the kingdom of another people.

"[Then ...] will take counsel ...] aeons ...] 74 who are dead, of the great aeons of imperishability. And they will go to Sakla their god. They will go in to the powers, accusing the great men who are in their glory.

"They will say to Sakla, 'What is the power of these men who stood in your presence, who were taken from the seed of Ham and Japheth, who will number four hundred men? They have been received into another aeon from which they had come forth, and they have overturned all the glory of your power and the dominion of your hand. For the seed of Noah through his sons has done all your will, and (so have) all the powers in the aeons over which your might rules, while both those men and the ones who are sojourners in their glory have not done your will. [But] they have turned aside your whole throng.'

"Then the god of the aeons will give them (some) of those who
serve [him . . .] 30 they will come upon that land 75 where the great men
will be who 1 have not been defiled, nor will be 1 defiled by any desire.
5 For their soul did not come 1 from a defiled hand, but it 1 came from
a great commandment 1 of an eternal angel. 1 Then fire 10 and sulphur
and asphalt will be cast upon 1 those men, and 1 fire and (blinding) mist
will come over 1 those aeons, and 1 the eyes of the powers of the illuminators
will be darkened, 15 and the aeons will not see 1 them in those
days. 1 And great clouds of light 1 will descend, and 1 other clouds of
light 20 will come down upon them from 1 the great aeons. 1

"Abrasax and Sablo and 1 Gamaliel will descend and bring 1 those
men out of 25 the fire and the wrath, and 1 take them above the aeons
1 and the rulers of the [powers], and 1 [take] them away [ . . . ] 1 of life
[ . . . ] 30 and take them away [ . . . ] 1 aeons [ . . . 76 dwelling place] of the
[great . . . ] 1 there with the holy angels 1 and the aeons. 1 The men will
be like 5 those angels, for they 1 are not strangers to them. But 1 they
work in the imperishable seed. 1

"Once again, for the 1 third time, the illuminator 10 of knowledge will
pass by in great 1 glory, in order to leave 1 (something) of the seed of
Noah 1 and the sons of Ham and Japheth — 1 to leave for himself 15
fruit-bearing trees. And he will 1 redeem their souls from the 1 day of
death. For the whole creation 1 that came from 1 the dead earth will be
20 under the authority of death. 1 But those who reflect upon the knowl-
dge 1 of the eternal God 1 in their heart(s) will not perish. 1 For they
have not received spirit 25 from this kingdom alone, 1 but they have re-
ceived (it) from an 1 [ . . . ] eternal angel. 1 [ . . . ] illuminator 1 [ . . . will]
come upon 30 [ . . . that is] dead [ . . . ] 77 of Seth. And he will perform
1 signs and wonders in order to 1 scorn the powers and their ruler. 1

"Then the god 5 of the powers will be disturbed, saying, 'What 1 is
the power of this man who 1 is higher than we?' Then he will 1 arouse a
great wrath against 1 that man. And 10 the glory will withdraw and 1
dwell in holy houses which 1 it has chosen for itself. And 1 the powers
will not see it 1 with their eyes, nor will they 15 see the illuminator either.
1 Then they will punish the flesh 1 of the man upon whom the 1 holy
spirit came.

"Then 1 the angels and all the 20 generations of the powers 1 will use
the name 1 in error, asking, 1 'Where did it (the error) come from?' or
1 'Where did the 25 words of deception, which 1 all the powers have
failed to discover, come from?
"[Now] the first kingdom [says of him] that he came from ... 78 A spirit ... to heaven. He was nourished in the heavens. He received the glory of that one and the power. He came to the bosom of his mother. And thus he came to the water.

"And the second kingdom says about him that he came from a great prophet. And a bird came, took the child who was born and brought him onto a high mountain. And he was nourished by the bird of heaven. An angel came forth there. He said to him, 'Arise! God has given glory to you.' He received glory and strength. And thus he came to the water.

"The third kingdom says of him that he came from a virgin womb. He was cast out of his city, he and his mother; he was brought to a desert place. He was nourished there. He came and received glory and power. And thus he came to the water.

"[The fourth] kingdom says of him that he came from a virgin. Solomon sought her, he and Phersalo and Saul and his armies, which had been sent out. Solomon himself sent his army of demons to seek out the virgin. And they did not find the one whom they sought, but the virgin who was given to them. It was she whom they fetched. Solomon took her. The Virgin became pregnant and gave birth to the child there. She nourished him on a border of the desert. When he had been nourished, he received glory and power from the seed from which he had been begotten. And thus he came to the water.

"And the fifth kingdom says of him that he came from a drop from heaven. He was thrown into the sea. The abyss received him, gave birth to him, and brought him to heaven."
He received glory and power.  
And thus he came to [the water].

"And [the] sixth kingdom [says]  
that a [... down] to the aeon 80 which is below, in order to [gather] flowers. She became pregnant from the desire of the flowers. She gave birth to him in that place.  
The angels of the flower garden nourished him.  
He received glory there and power.  
And thus he came to the water.

"And the seventh kingdom says of him  
that he is a drop. It came from heaven to earth. Dragons brought him down to caves. He became a child. A spirit came upon him and brought him on high to the place where the drop had come forth.  
He received glory and power there.  
And thus he came to the water.

"And the eighth kingdom says of him  
that a cloud came upon the earth and enveloped a rock. He came from it.  
The angels who were above the cloud nourished him.  
He [received] glory [and] power [there].  
And [thus he] came to [the water].

"And the ninth kingdom says of him  
that from the nine Muses one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent (some) time seated there, so that she desired herself alone in order to become androgynous. She fulfilled her desire and became pregnant from her desire. He was born.  
The angels who were over the desire nourished him.  
And he received glory there and power.  
And thus he came to the water.

"The tenth kingdom says of him  
that his god loved a cloud of desire. He begot him in his hand and cast upon the cloud above him (some) of the drop, and he was born.  
He received glory and power there.  
And thus he came to the water."
"And the eleventh kingdom says that the father desired his own daughter. She herself became pregnant [from] her father. She cast [. . .] tomb out in the desert.

The angel nourished him there. And thus he came to the water.

"The twelfth kingdom says of him that he came from two illuminators. He was nourished there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water.

"And the thirteenth kingdom says of him that every birth of their ruler is a word. And his word received a mandate there. He received glory and power. And thus he came to the water, in order that the desire of those powers might be satisfied.

"But the generation without a king over it says that God chose him from all the aeons. He caused knowledge of the undefiled one of truth to come to be [in] him. [He (or: It)] said, 'Out of a foreign air, from a great aeon, the great illuminator came forth. [And he made] the generation of those men whom he had chosen for himself shine, so that they could shine upon the whole aeon.'

"Then the seed, those who will receive his name upon the water and (that) of them all, will fight against the power. And a cloud of darkness will come upon them.

"Then the peoples will cry out with a great voice, saying, 'Blessed is the soul of those men because they have known God with a knowledge of the truth! They shall live forever, because they have not been corrupted by their desire, along with the angels, nor have they accomplished the works of the powers, but they have stood in his presence in a knowledge of God like light that has come forth from fire and blood.

"But we have done every deed of the powers senselessly. We have boasted in the transgression of all our works. We have [cried] against [the God] of [truth] because all his works [.] is eternal. These are against our spirits. For now we have known that our souls will die the death.'"
"Then a voice came to them, saying, 'Micheu and Michar and Mnesinous, who are over the holy baptism and the living water, why were you crying out against the living God with lawless voices and tongues without law over them, and souls full of blood and foul [deeds]? You are full of works that are not of the truth, but your ways are full of joy and rejoicing. Having defiled the water of life, you have drawn it within the will of the powers to whom you have been given to serve them.

"And your thought is not like that of those men whom you persecute [...] desire [...]. Their fruit does not wither. But they will be known up to the great aeons, because the words they have kept, of the God of the aeons, were not committed to the book, nor were they written. But angelic (beings) will bring them, whom all the generations of men will not know. For they will be on a high mountain, upon a rock of truth. Therefore they will be named "The Words of Imperishability [and] Truth," for those who know the eternal God in wisdom of knowledge and teaching of angels forever, for he knows all things."

These are the revelations which Adam made known to Seth his son. And his son taught his seed about them. This is the hidden knowledge of Adam, which he gave to Seth, which is the holy baptism of those who know the eternal knowledge through those born of the word and the imperishable illuminators, who came from the holy seed: Yesseus, Mazareus, [Yesse]dekeus, [the Living] Water.

The Apocalypse of Adam
THE ACTS OF PETER
AND THE TWELVE APOSTLES (VI,1)

Introduced by

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The title appears only at the conclusion of the tractate. At first glance it gives the impression of referring to thirteen apostles (Peter plus the twelve). But a reading of the text makes it clear that the title probably has to do with two different "acts": an act of Peter (1,30-5,5) and an act of the apostolic group (5,5-12,19). The title, however, must nonetheless be secondary, since the number twelve contradicts the explicit statement of the text that the disciples numbered eleven (9,20-21).

The tractate can be divided into four major units:

1. An introductory section, which sets the stage for the tractate. The first seven lines probably contained some indication of initial setting and purpose. The narrator is Peter (1,30) and the time is after the crucifixion, since the apostles undertake their journey on their own immediate initiative, and Jesus is not with them. The fact that there are only eleven disciples, however, suggests the preascension period. Having decided to undertake their ministry together, the apostles find a ship and set sail (1,16-26). They appear to leave their destination to the Lord. The ship arrives at an island city called Habitation, and Peter goes to learn about lodgings.

2. Peter meets a pearl merchant and sees the response of the rich and the poor to him (2,10-5,18). He observes that the rich turn away from him when he hawks his wares because they think he really has none. The poor, however, flock to him, although they lack the means to buy what he offers. They would be content to see a pearl. But the merchant says he will give them one without cost, if they would go to his city. The poor ask Peter about the hazards of the way to the city. Peter tells them what he has heard and turns to the merchant, asking about his name and the hardships of the way. The merchant tells him his name is Lithargoel, which is interpreted in the text as a lightweight, gazelle-like (i.e., gleaming like a gazelle's eyes) stone, presumably a pearl.

3. The journey of Peter and his friends to Lithargoel's city (5,19-8,11), following instructions by Lithargoel. The only way to prepare for the journey to the city of "nine gates" is complete renunciation of possessions and a regimen of fasting, so that one will have nothing predators might want (5,19-6,8). All that is needed is the name of Jesus (6,9-19). Then Peter sees a vision of the walls of the city surrounded by waves. The meaning of this is interpreted in a brief dialogue between Peter and an old man. Peter and the disciples then make the journey to the city.
4. The appearance of Lithargoel as a physician, his revelation of himself as Jesus Christ, and the commissioning of the eleven disciples (8,11-12,19). Lithargoel comes out of the city disguised as a physician and says that he will show them where Lithargoel lives (8,11-35). Instead of doing that, however, he reveals that he is Jesus Christ (9,1-19), in a dialogue with Peter that has been traced to Matthew 16,13-19. After the disciples prostrate themselves in worship and indicate their willingness to do his will, Christ, who is henceforth called the Lord, gives them a box and pouch of medicine and commissions them to return to Habitation, the city from which they came. They are to teach and minister to the faithful, with special emphasis on the poor (9,1-10,13). Peter objects that they have nothing to give the poor, since they have renounced everything, but the Lord points out that they have his name, which is of more value than anything else (10,13-30). After further discussion, the dialogue concludes with the injunction to avoid the rich. The disciples accept the commission and the Lord departs.

The text is composite. This can be seen by the awkward relationship among the various sections. For example, between sections 2 and 3, the reader expects the poor to go to the pearl merchant’s city, but only the disciples do; two differing explanations are given for Peter’s request about the way; the reader is unprepared for Peter’s asking about the merchant’s name; the reader is surprised that journey from the island city can be undertaken by foot. Examples of problems between 4 and the earlier sections are these: the sudden shift to third person narrative; the information that the disciples are expected to continue a ministry to Christians (10,4-6) (one had the impression at the start that the disciples were embarking on a mission to a non-Christian world), and the presence of explicit rules regarding church life at the conclusion of the tractate.

Four originally independent accounts seem to have been brought together by an editor. Three probably began as parables or allegories, somewhat resembling those found in The Shepherd of Hermas: the story of the pearl merchant who is rejected by the rich and accepted by the poor; the account of a city surrounded by walls (in part three, above) called Habitation; and the story of a journey whose successful completion required giving up food and possessions, rather than having enough of them. The fourth is the account of Christ’s commissioning of the disciples to undertake a ministry of preaching and healing among poor and sick Christians. These accounts are related to each other by the common presence of Peter and the other disciples, and by the name Lithargoel, which serves to connect the pearl merchant, in section 2, with the one who gives instructions about the way, in section 3, and, then, also, with Christ, in section 4, who commissions the disciples.

The narrative intention of the final editor appears to have been to depict the disciples’ preparation for apostolic activity. In the course of the account, he shifts the time frame from the earliest apostolic period to that of his own time. The result is that, at the conclusion of the final segment, it is not really the original disciples who are being commissioned, but their latter day representatives. In view of the shift, it appears that the editor wished to remind contemporary church leaders about their true mission.

Lithargoel may originally have been a non-Christian deity. But since no record of a Lithargoel cult has come down to us, it seems more reasonable to think that identification of Lithargoel with Jesus Christ (9,8-15) was the intention when the
word was first coined. (See Acts of Peter 20 and Rv 2:17.) The image of Christ as a physician may have been a way of dealing with the popularity of the cult of Asclepius.

It has sometimes been assumed that this tractate is gnostic. But that view has been based more on its presence in the Nag Hammadi library than on the text itself. As has been discussed elsewhere (see introduction to Asclepius 21-29 [VI,8]), the codex in which it is found is not itself gnostic, but rather a miscellaneous collection of spiritual writings reflecting on the ultimate fate of the soul. If one examines the tractate by itself, little is found that would have offended developing orthodoxy. The Christology is that of the divine sonship; the crucifixion and death of Jesus, although not mentioned, may be implied (see 2,14). The theme of apostolic poverty is found in the Gospels, as is the polemic against the rich. A moderate encratite emphasis may be seen in the prohibition on the eating of meat, but there is nothing said about sexual activity or marriage. The tractate, then, does not appear to have sprung from or be directed to a sectarian group within early Christianity. The editor rather seems to be standing within the broad church and to be appealing for a return to apostolic practice on the part of the leaders.

It seems unlikely that this tractate would have been part of the lost portion of the apocryphal Acts of Peter, as has been proposed (see introduction to The Act of Peter [BG,4], for discussion).

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles is to be grouped with the apocryphal Acts of the second and third centuries, rather than with the later ones, with which it has little in common. The similarity of portions of it to The Shepherd of Hermas suggests a second-century date for them.

THE ACTS OF PETER AND THE TWELVE APOSTLES

VI 1, 1-12, 22

[... ] which [ ... ] purpose [ ... : ] after [ ... ] us [ ... ] apostles [ ... ]. [ ... ] We sailed [ ... ] of the body. [Others] were not anxious in [their ] hearts. And in our hearts, we were united. We agreed to fulfill the ministry to which the Lord appointed us. And we made a covenant with each other.

We went down to the sea at an opportune moment, which came to us from the Lord. We found a ship moored at the shore ready to embark, and we spoke with the sailors of the ship about our coming aboard with them. They showed great kindness toward us as was ordained by the Lord. And after we had embarked, we sailed a day and a night. After that, a wind came up behind the ship and brought us to a small city in the midst of the sea.

And I, Peter, inquired about the name of this city from residents who were standing on the dock. [A man] among [them] answered,
saying, "The name of this city is Habitation, that is, Foundation..." And the leader among them holding the palm branch at the edge of the dock. And after we had gone ashore with the baggage, I went into [the] city, to seek [advice] about lodging.

A man came out wearing a cloth bound around his waist, and a gold belt girded [it]. Also a napkin was tied over [his] chest, extending over his shoulders and covering his head and his hands.

I was staring at the man, because he was beautiful in his form and stature. There were four parts of his body that I saw: the soles of his feet and a part of his chest and the palms of his hands and his visage. These things I was able to see. A book cover like (those of) my books was in his left hand. A staff of styrax wood was in his right hand. His voice was resounding as he slowly spoke, crying out in the city, "Pearls! Pearls!"

I, indeed, thought he was a man of that city. I said to him, "My brother and my friend!" He answered me, then, saying, "Rightly did you say, 'My brother and my friend.' What is it you seek from me?" I said to him, "[I ask you] about lodging for me and the brothers also, because we are strangers here." He said to me, "For this reason have I myself just said, 'My brother and my friend,' because I also am a fellow stranger like you."

And having said these things, he cried out, "Pearls! Pearls!" The rich men of that city heard his voice. They came out of their hidden storerooms. And some were looking out from the storerooms of their houses. Others looked out from their upper windows. And they did not see (that they could gain) anything from him, because there was no pouch on his back nor bundle inside his cloth and napkin. And because of their disdain they did not even acknowledge him. He, for his part, did not reveal himself to them. They returned to their storerooms, saying, "This man is mocking us."

And the poor of that city heard his voice, and they came to the man who sells this pearl. They said, "Please take the trouble to show us the pearl so that we may, then, see it with our (own) eyes. For we are the poor. And we do not have this... price to pay for it. But [show us] that we might say to our friends that [we saw] a pearl with our (own) eyes." He answered, saying to them, "If it is possible, come to my city so that I may not only show it before your (very) eyes, but give it to you for nothing."

And indeed they, the poor of that city, heard and said, "Since we
are beggars, we surely know that a man does not give a pearl to a beggar, but (it is) bread and money that is usually received. Now then, the kindness which we want to receive from you (is) that you show us the pearl before our eyes. And we will say to our friends proudly that we saw a pearl with our (own) eyes—because it is not found among the poor, especially such beggars (as these). He answered (and) said to them, "If it is possible, you yourselves come to my city, so that I may not only show you it, but give it to you for nothing." The poor and the beggars rejoiced because of the man who gives for nothing.

[The men asked Peter] about the hardships. Peter answered [and] told those things that he had heard about the hardships of the way. Because they are interpreters of the hardships in their ministry.

He said to the man who sells this pearl, "I want to know your name and the hardships of the way to your city because we are strangers and servants of God. It is necessary for us to spread the word of God in every city harmoniously." He answered and said, "If you seek my name, Lithargoel is my name, the interpretation of which is, the light, gazelle-like stone.

"And also (concerning) the road to the city, which you asked me about, I will tell you about it. No man is able to go on that road, except one who has forsaken everything that he has and has fasted daily from stage to stage. For many are the robbers and wild beasts on that road. The one who carries bread with him on the road, the black dogs kill because of the bread. The one who carries a costly garment of the world with him, the robbers kill [because of the garment. The one who carries] water [with him, the wolves kill because of the water], since they were thirsty [for it]. The one who is anxious about [meat] and green vegetables, the lions eat because of the meat. [If] he evades the lions, the bulls devour him because of the green vegetables."

When he had said these things to me, I sighed within myself, saying, "[Great] hardships are on the road! If only Jesus would give us power to walk it!" He looked at me since my face was sad, and I signed. He said to me, "Why do you sigh, if you, indeed, know this name 'Jesus' and believe him? He is a great power for giving strength. For I too believe in the Father who sent him."

I replied, asking him, "What is the name of the place to which you go, your city?" He said to me, "This is the name of my city, 'Nine Gates.' Let us praise God as we are mindful that the tenth is the head." After this I went away from him in peace.
As I was about to go and call my friends, I saw waves and large high walls surrounding the bounds of the city. I marveled at the great things I saw. I saw an old man sitting and I asked him if the name of the city was really Habitation. He said, "Habitation..." He said to me, "[You speak] truly, for we inhabit here because we endure." [I responded], saying, "Justly have men named it, because (by) everyone endures his trials, cities are inhabited, and a precious kingdom comes from them, because they endure in the midst of the apostasies and the difficulties of the storms. So that in this way, the city of everyone who endures the burden of his yoke of faith will be inhabited, and he will be included in the kingdom of heaven."

I hurried and went and called my friends so that we might go to the city that he, Lithargoel, appointed for us. In a bond of faith we forsook everything as he had said (to do). We evaded the robbers, because they did not find their garments with us. We evaded the wolves, because they did not find the water with us for which they thirsted. We evaded the lions, because they did not find the desire for meat with us. We evaded the bulls... they did not find green vegetables. A great joy came upon us and a peaceful carefreeness like that of our Lord. We rested ourselves in front of the gate, and we talked with each other about that which is not a distraction of this world. Rather we continued in contemplation of the faith.

As we discussed the robbers on the road, whom we evaded, behold Lithargoel, having changed, came out to us. He had the appearance of a physician, since an unguent box was under his arm, and a young disciple was following him carrying a pouch full of medicine. We did not recognize him.

Peter responded and said to him, "We want you to do us a favor, because we are strangers, and take us to the house of Lithargoel before evening comes." He said, "In uprightness of heart I will show it to you. But I am amazed at how you knew this good man. For he does not reveal himself to every man, because he himself is the son of a great king. Rest yourselves a little so that I may go and heal this man and come (back)." He hurried and came (back) quickly.

He said to Peter, "Peter!" And Peter was frightened, for how did he know that his name was Peter? Peter responded to the Savior, "How do you know me, for you called my name?" Lithargoel an-
answered, "I want to ask you who gave the name Peter to you?" He said to him, "It was Jesus Christ, the son of the living God. He gave this name to me." He answered and said, "It is I! Recognize me, Peter." He loosened the garment, which clothed him — the one into which he had changed himself because of us — revealing to us in truth that it was he.

We prostrated ourselves on the ground and worshipped him. We comprised eleven disciples. He stretched forth his hand and caused us to stand. We spoke with him humbly. Our heads were bowed down in unworthiness as we said, "What you wish we will do. But give us power to do what you wish at all times."

He gave them the unguent box and the pouch that was in the hand of the young disciple. He commanded them like this, saying, "Go into [the] city from which you came, which is called Habitation. Continue in endurance as you teach all those who have believed in my name, because I have endured in hardships of the faith. I will give you your reward. To the poor of that city give what they need in order to live until I give them what is better, which I told you that I will give you for nothing."

Peter answered and said to him, "Lord, you have taught us to forsake the world and everything in it. We have renounced them for your sake. What we are concerned about (now) is the food for a single day. Where will we be able to find the needs that you ask us to provide for the poor?"

The Lord answered and said, "O Peter, it was necessary that you understand the parable that I told you! Do you not understand that my name, which you teach, surpasses all riches, and the wisdom of God surpasses gold, and silver and precious stone(s)?"

He gave them the pouch of medicine and said, "Heal all the sick of the city who believe in my name." Peter was afraid to reply to him for the second time. He signaled to the one who was beside him, who was John: "You talk this time." John answered and said, "Lord, before you we are afraid to say many words. But it is you who asks us to practice this skill. We have not been taught to be physicians. How then will we know how to heal bodies as you have told us?"

He answered them, "Rightly have you spoken, John, for I know that the physicians of this world heal what belongs to the world. The physicians of souls, however, heal the heart. Heal the bodies first, therefore, so that through the real powers of healing for their
bodies, without medicine of the world, they may believe in you, that you have power to heal the illnesses of the heart also.

"The rich men of the city, however, those who did not see fit even to acknowledge me, but who reveled in their wealth and pride — with such as these, therefore, do not dine in [their] houses nor be friends with them, lest their partiality influence you. For many in the churches have shown partiality to the rich, because they also are sinful, and they give occasion for others to sin. But judge them with uprightness, so that your ministry may be glorified, and that my name also, may be glorified in the churches." The disciples answered and said, "Yes, truly this is what is fitting to do."

They prostrated themselves on the ground and worshipped him. He caused them to stand and departed from them in peace. Amen.
THE THUNDER: PERFECT MIND (VI,2)

Introduced and translated by

GEORGE W. MACRAE

Edited by

DOUGLAS M. PARROTT

The title appears to be double: "The Thunder" is not syntactically related to "Perfect Mind" but is separated by a mark of punctuation (:). It is nowhere referred to in the body of the work (unless one should reconstruct "[perfect] mind" at 18,9).

In content Thund. is virtually unique in the Nag Hammadi library and very unusual. It is a revelation discourse by a female figure who is, except possibly for the title, otherwise not specifically identified. The work has no apparent structural divisions but is written throughout in the first person, interweaving and combining three types of statement: self-proclamation in the "I am" style, exhortations to heed the speaker, and reproaches for failures to heed or love, etc. The most distinctive feature is that the self-proclamations are most often antithetical or even paradoxical. The parallelism of form suggests that originally these may have been part of a hymnic structure.

Parallels for this revelatory genre can be adduced from a variety of sources. In Orig. World (II,5) 114,7-15, the heavenly Eve utters a hymnic self-proclamation that is very similar to Thund. 13,19-14,9, and a trace of the same material, though not in the form of self-proclamation, occurs in a similar context in Hyp. Arch. (II,4) 89,14-17. It may be significant that the Thund. passage thus paralleled is not repeated in the work, whereas many of the other self-proclamations occur more than once in Thund., sometimes in varying forms. In such other Nag Hammadi works as Trim. Prot. (XIII,1) and the longer ending of Ap. John (II,1:30,11-31,25), there are examples of the "I style" of proclamation by a revealer figure, but without the antithetical context. There are three interesting parallels to Thund., in content or in style or in both, outside the Nag Hammadi corpus. One is the well-known "Hymn of Christ" in the Acts of John 94-96, in which Christ sings of himself in a succession of antitheses and contrasts, without, however, the use of "I am" formulas. The second example is a passage in the Mandaean Ginza R, Book VI, the so-called "Book of Dinanukht," which is generally thought to be one of the older sections of the Ginza. There the spirit Ewath recites a formula which contains antitheses similar to, but for the most part not identical with, those in Thund.: "I am death, I am life. I am darkness, I am light. I am error, I am truth, etc." The third example is a series of passages in ancient Indian literature in which contrasting or contradictory assertions are made of the Deity either in the "I am" form (Bhagavad-Gita IX,16-19) or in the second or third person (Atharva-Veda X, viii,27-28; Śvetāsvatara Upanishad
These examples include both personal categories ("Thou art woman, Thou art man") and non-personal ones ("Death am I and deathlessness, What is not and that which is").

In terms of the religious traditions represented in the Nag Hammadi collection, *Thund.* is difficult to classify. It contains no distinctively Christian, Jewish, or gnostic allusions and does not seem clearly to presuppose any particular gnostic myth. There are resemblances to the tone and style of the wisdom hymns in the Biblical and intertestamental wisdom literature, and the self-proclamations are similar to the Isis aretalogy inscriptions. But if the multiple assertions in these works are intended to assert the universality of Isis or of God's wisdom, perhaps the antithetical assertions of *Thund.* are a way of asserting the totally other-worldly transcendence of the revealer.

(George W. MacRae †)

There has been a tendency among scholars to assume that *Thund.* is gnostic, in spite of George MacRae's caution, expressed above. Accordingly it has been proposed that the female figure here is to be understood as a combination of the higher and lower Sophia figures found in gnostic literature. It has also been proposed that the figure is Eve, as she is understood in gnostic writings found in the Nag Hammadi collection (see references above) and mentioned elsewhere.

If one takes *Thund.* at face value and includes the title in consideration, the female figure who is the speaker throughout is named Thunder (feminine in Greek), a figure who must be understood in terms of the parallel phrase in the title: Perfect Mind. Thunder, in Greek myth, in the Hebrew Bible, and elsewhere, comes forth from the highest god (the Greeks sometimes called Zeus "The Thundering One"). It is the way in which the god makes his presence known on earth. In the tractate, Thunder is allegorized as Perfect Mind, meaning the extension of the divine into the world (1,1-2). The understanding of Perfect Mind appears to owe much to the Stoic notion of cosmic Pneuma, the active, intelligent element in all things, made up of air and fire. It was thought of as spanning all worldly divisions and dichotomies and at some level being responsible for everything that occurs. In its manifestation as reason, it was also able to instruct those who listen about the way to true life. (For Thunder's similar role, see 20,26-27; 21,20-32). The tractate as it stands, is not Stoic, since it speaks of a power above Perfect Mind (1,1). But with its conception of the immanence of the divine in all aspects of the world, neither is it gnostic. It still remains "difficult to classify."

(Douglas M. Parrott)
I was sent forth from [the] power,
   and I have come to those who reflect upon me,
   and I have been found among those who seek after me.
Look upon me, you (pl.) who reflect upon me,
   and you hearers, hear me.
   You who are waiting for me, take me to yourselves.
And do not banish me from your sight.
And do not make your voice hate me, nor your hearing.
   Do not be ignorant of me anywhere or any time. Be on your guard!
   Do not be ignorant of me.

For I am the first and the last.
I am the honored one and the scorned one.
I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am (the mother) and the daughter.
I am the members of my mother.
I am the barren one
   and many are her sons.
I am she whose wedding is great,
   and I have not taken a husband.
I am the midwife and she who does not bear.
I am the solace of my labor pains.
I am the bride and the bridegroom,
   and it is my husband who begot me.
I am the mother of my father
   and the sister of my husband,
   and he is my offspring.
I am the slave of him who prepared me.
I am the ruler of my offspring.
   But he is the one who begot me before the time
   on a birthday.
   And he is my offspring [in] (due) time,
and my power is from him.
I am the staff of his power in his youth,
[and] he is the rod of my old age.
And whatever he wills happens to me.
I am the silence that is incomprehensible
and the idea whose remembrance is frequent.
I am the voice whose sound is manifold
and the word whose appearance is multiple.
I am the utterance of my name.

Why, you who hate me, do you love me
and hate those who love me?
You who deny me, confess me,
and you who confess me, deny me.
You who tell the truth about me, lie about me,
and you who have lied about me, tell the truth about me.
You who know me, be ignorant of me,
and those who have not known me, let them know me.

For I am knowledge and ignorance.
I am shame and boldness.
I am shameless; I am ashamed.
I am strength and I am fear.
I am war and peace.
Give heed to me.
I am the one who is disgraced and the great one.

Give heed to my poverty and my wealth.
Do not be arrogant to me when I am cast out upon the earth,
[and] you will find me in [those that] are to come.
And do not look [upon] me on the dung-heap
nor go and leave me cast out,
and you will find me in the kingdoms.
And do not look upon me when I am cast out among those who are disgraced and in the least places,
nor laugh at me.
And do not cast me out among those who are slain in violence.
But I, I am compassionate and I am cruel.

Be on your guard!
Do not hate my obedience
and do not love my self-control.
In my weakness, do not 20 forsake me,
    and do not be afraid of my power. 1
For why do you despise my fear
and curse my pride? 25
But I am she who exists in all fears
    and strength in trembling.
I am she who is weak,
    and I am well in a pleasant place.
I am 30 senseless and I am wise. 1

Why have you hated me in your counsels?
For I shall be silent among those who are silent,
    and I shall appear and speak. 16
Why then have you hated me, you Greeks? 1
    Because I am a barbarian among [the] barbarians?
For I am the wisdom [of the] Greeks
    and the knowledge of [the] barbarians.
I am the judgment of [the] Greeks and of the barbarians.
[I] am the one whose image is great in Egypt
    and the one who has no image among the barbarians.
I am the one who has been hated everywhere
    and who has been loved everywhere.
I am the one whom they call Life,
    and you have called Death.
I am the one whom they call Law, 15
    and you have called Lawlessness. 1
I am the one whom you have pursued,
    and I am the one whom you have seized.
I am the one whom you have scattered,
    and you have gathered me together. 20
I am the one before whom you have been ashamed,
    and you have been shameless to me.
I am she who does not keep festival,
    and I am she whose festivals are many.
I, I am godless,
    and I am the one whose God is great.
I am the one whom you have reflected upon,
    and you have scorned me.
I am unlearned,
    and they learn from me.
I am the one whom you have despised, and you reflect upon me.
I am the one whom you have hidden from, and you appear to me.
But whenever you hide yourselves, I myself will appear. 17
For [whenever] you [appear], I myself [will hide] from you.

Those who have [... to it [...] senselessly [...].

Take me [... understanding] from grief, and take me to yourselves from understanding [and] grief.
And take me to yourselves from places that are ugly and in ruin, and rob from those which are good even though in ugliness. 
Out of shame, take me to yourselves shamelessly; and out of shamelessness and shame, upbraid my members in yourselves.

And come forward to me, you who know me and you who know my members, and establish the great ones among the small first creatures.
Come forward to childhood, and do not despise it because it is small and it is little.
And do not turn away greatnesses in some parts from the smallnesses, for the smallnesses are known from the greatnesses.

Why do you curse me and honor me? You have wounded and you have had mercy.
Do not separate me from the first ones whom you have [known]. [And] do not cast anyone [out nor] turn anyone away [...] turn you away and [...] know] him not. [...].
What is mine [...].
I know the [first ones] and those after them [know] me.

But I am the mind of [... and the rest of [...].
I am the knowledge of my inquiry, and the finding of those who seek after me, and the command of those who ask of me, and the power of the powers in my knowledge of the angels, who have been sent at my word,
and of gods in their seasons by my counsel, and of spirits of every man who exists with me, and of women who dwell within me.

I am the one who is honored, and who is praised, and who is despised scornfully.

I am peace, and war has come because of me.

And I am an alien and a citizen.

I am the substance and the one who has no substance.

Those who are without association with me are ignorant of me, and those who are in my substance are the ones who know me.

Those who are close to me have been ignorant of me, and those who are far away from me are the ones who have known me.

On the day when I am close to [you], [you] are far away [from me], [and] on the day when I am far away from you, [I am close] to you.

[I am within.]

[I am of the natures.

I am of the creation of the [spirits].

[I am] request of the souls.

I am control and the uncontrollable.

I am the union and the dissolution.

I am the abiding and I am the dissolution.

I am the one below,

and they come up to me.

I am the judgment and the acquittal.

I, I am sinless,

and the root of sin derives from me.

I am lust in (outward) appearance, and interior self-control exists within me.

I am the hearing which is attainable to everyone and the speech which cannot be grasped.

I am a mute who does not speak, and great is my multitude of words.

Hear me in gentleness, and learn of me in roughness. I am she who cries out,
and I am cast \(^30\) forth upon the face of the earth. \\
I prepare the bread and \(^1\) my mind within. \\
I am the \(^1\) knowledge of my name. \\
I am the one \(^1\) who cries out, \\
and I listen. \(^20\) \\
I appear and \([\ldots]\) \(^1\) walk in \([\ldots]\) \(^1\) seal of my \([\ldots]\). \(^5\) \\
I am \([\ldots]\) \(^1\) the defense \([\ldots]\). \(^1\) \\
I am the one who is called \(^1\) Truth, \\
and iniquity \([\ldots]\). \(^1\) \\
You honor me \([\ldots]\) \(^10\) and you whisper against \(\text{me}\). \\
You \(\text{who}\) \(^1\) are vanquished, \\
judge them \(\text{who vanquish you}\) \(^1\) before they give judgment \\
against you, \(^1\) \\
because the judge and partiality \(^1\) exist in you. \\
If you are condemned \(^{15}\) by this one, who will \(^1\) acquit you? \\
Or if you are acquitted \(^1\) by him, who will be able to \(^1\) detain \\
you? \\
For what is \(^1\) inside of you is what is outside of you, \(^{20}\) \\
and the one who fashions you on the outside \(^1\) \\
is the one who shaped \(^1\) the inside of you. \\
And what \(^1\) you see outside of you, \(^1\) \\
you see inside of you; \(^{25}\) \\
it is visible and it is your garment. \(^1\) \\
Hear me, you hearers, \(^1\) \\
and learn of my words, \(^1\) you who know me. \\
I am \(^1\) the hearing that is attainable to everything; \(^{30}\) \\
I am the speech that cannot \(^1\) be grasped. \\
I am \(^1\) the name of the sound \\
and the sound \(^1\) of the name. \\
I am the sign \(^1\) of the letter \\
and the designation \(^{35}\) of the division. \\
And I \([\ldots]\). \\
\([\ldots]\) \(^{21}\) \(^4\) light \([\ldots]\). \\
\([\ldots]\) \(^6\) hearers \([\ldots]\) \(^1\) to you \\
\([\ldots]\) \(^1\) the great power. \\
And \([\ldots]\) \(^1\) will not move the name. \(^{10}\) \\
\([\ldots]\) to the one who created me. \(^1\) \\
And I will speak his name. \(^1\)
Look then at his words
and all the writings which have been completed.
Give heed then, you hearers
and you also, the angels and those who have been sent,
and you spirits who have arisen from the dead.
For I am the one who alone exists,
and I have no one who will judge me.

For many are the pleasant forms which exist in
numerous sins,
and incontinencies,
and disgraceful passions,
and fleeting pleasures,
which (men) embrace until they become sober
and go up to their resting-place.
And they will find me there,
and they will live,
and they will not die again.
AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING (VI,3)

Introduced and translated by

GEORGE W. MACRAE

Edited by

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The third tractate of Codex VI is not obviously related either to what precedes or to what follows. It is a heavily metaphorical exposition of the origin, condition, and ultimate destiny of the soul. With respect to its contents, there are some reasons for regarding Auth. Teach. as a composite or collection of several explanations of the soul’s origin, fall, and victory over the material world. There is a major break at 25,26, where the narrative returns to the world of the Father where it has (presumably) begun, and from 26,20 onward there are several sections containing statements in the first person plural. Moreover, a number of different extended metaphors are introduced successively to explain the same phenomenon, the condition of the soul in the world, although some key metaphors such as those of the food, the medicine, the bridal relationship occur in several sections of the work. Some of these metaphors are extremely common in the literature of the Roman Hellenistic era, e.g., the bridegroom and life as an athletic contest, but others are highly distinctive and almost unparalleled in their elaborateness, e.g., the fisherman and the dealers in bodies. Auth. Teach. contains no typical gnostic cosmogenic myth — unless it is alluded to in the passages now lost through some of the early lacunae — but it seems to presuppose a generally gnostic, i.e., anticosmic dualist, understanding of the fate of the soul in the material world. It has a number of parallels in the remainder of the Nag Hammadi library, notably with Gos. Phil. (II,3), Exeg. Soul (II,6), Teach. Silv. (VII,4), and the Hermetic tractates of Codex VI, as well as with the Corpus Hermeticum. There is nothing in Auth. Teach., however, to suggest that it is itself a Hermetic composition. It is also distinctively different from the De anima literature of the early Christian centuries, whether of Tertullian and his sources, or of Porphyry or Iamblichus, in that it is totally nonphilosophical in its forms of expression. Apart from a few expressions such as “evangelists,” “hearing the preaching,” and the like, there is nothing specifically Christian in the document, nor is there any trace of the heavy dependence on Jewish speculation which we find in so many other Nag Hammadi tractates.

Perhaps there is a clue, though a veiled one, to be sure, to its origin in the section 33,4-34,34, which contains a polemic against the senseless who are distinguished both from the “we” with whom the writer identifies and from the pagans, who are more or less excusable on grounds of ignorance. One is tempted to think of a Christian berating the Jews for their failure to heed the message which they have heard preached to them, but again there is no unambiguous al-
clusion to either Christian or Jewish belief or practice. In its emphasis on the evil character of the material world, on the heavenly origin of the spiritual soul, on the role of revealed knowledge as salvific, *Auth. Teach.* appears to be a gnostic work. But it lacks the tone of self-assurance and confidence, almost arrogance, which characterizes many unquestionably gnostic treatises. The soul is in perpetual danger of succumbing to the "adversary," or to the false attraction of the material, and consequently she must maintain a practised vigilance.

(George W. MacRae †)

Since George W. MacRae wrote, attempts have been made to be more precise about the group responsible for the tractate. Some have argued that they were in fact Gnostics, who only expressed as much of the gnostic myth in the tractate as was needed. A fundamental difference may be seen between Gnostics and traditional Christians, it is argued, in 33,4-34,34, where gnostic "seekers" contrast themselves with the "senseless" faith-oriented Christians, who have "found" the way, in sterile creedal religion. Others believe that second-century Christian Middle Platonists produced the tractate. They find numerous echoes to passages in the New Testament. They also find the distinctive Middle Platonic doctrine of two souls (spiritual and rational). Neither of these basically antithetical positions is well enough supported in the text to warrant abandoning the cautious assessment expressed by MacRae.

(Douglas M. Parrott)

**AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING**

VI 22, 1-35, 24

[...] 6 in heaven [...] 1 within him [...] 1 anyone appears [...] 1 the hidden heavens [...] 10 appear, and [before] 1 the invisible, ineffable worlds 1 appeared. 1 From these the invisible 1 soul of righteousness 15 came, being 1 a fellow member, and a fellow 1 body, and a fellow spirit. 1 Whether she is in the descent 1 or is in the Pleroma, 20 she is not separated from them, but they see 1 her and she looks at them 1 in the invisible world. 1

Secretly her bridegroom 1 fetched it. He presented it to her mouth 25 to make her eat it like 1 food, and he applied the word 1 to her eyes as a medicine 1 to make her see with her mind 1 and perceive her kinsmen 30 and learn about her root, 1 in order that she might cling to her branch 1 from which she had first come forth, 1 in order that she might receive what 1 is hers and renounce [matter].

[...] 23 5 he [dwelt ...] 1 having [...] 1 sons. The sons [...] 1 truly, those who have 1 [come] from his seed, 10 call the sons 1 of the woman
"our brothers." In this very way, when the spiritual soul was cast into the body, it became a brother to lust and hatred and envy, and a material soul. So therefore the body came from lust, and lust came from material substance. For this reason the soul became a brother to them.

And yet they are outsiders, without power to inherit from the male, but they will inherit from their mother only. Whenever, therefore, the soul wishes to inherit along with the outsiders for the possessions of the outsiders are proud passions, the pleasures of life, hateful envies, vainglorious things, nonsensical things, accusations for her [prostitution], he excludes her and puts her into the brothel. For [debauchery] for her. [She left modestly behind. For death and life are set before everyone. Whichever of these two they wish, then, they will choose for themselves.

That one (fem.) then will fall into drinking much wine in debauchery. For wine is the debaucher. Therefore she does not remember her brothers and her father, for pleasure and sweet profits deceive her.

Having left knowledge behind, she fell into bestiality. For a senseless person exists in bestiality, not knowing what it is proper to say and what it is proper not to say. But, on the other hand, the gentle son inherits from his father with pleasure, while his father rejoices over him because he receives honor on account of him from everyone, as he looks again for the way to double the things that he has received. For the outsiders.

[..] to mix with the [..]. For if a thought of lust enters into a virgin man, he has already become contaminated. And their gluttony cannot mix with moderation. For if the chaff is mixed with the wheat, it is not the chaff that is contaminated, but the wheat. For since they are mixed with each other, no one will buy her wheat because it is contaminated. But they will coax him, "Give us this chaff!", seeing the wheat mixed with it, until they get it and throw it with all other chaff, and that chaff mixes with all other materials. But a pure seed is kept in storehouses that are secure. All these things, then, we have spoken.

And before anything came into being, it was the Father alone who existed, before the worlds that are in the heavens appeared, or the world that is on the earth, or principality, or authority, or the powers. [..] appear [..] and [...]. And] nothing came into being without his wish.
He, then, the Father, wishing to reveal his [wealth] and his glory, brought about this great contest in this world, wishing to make the contestants appear, and make all those who contend leave behind the things that had come into being, and despise them with a lofty, incomprehensible knowledge, and flee to the one who exists.

And (as for) those who contend with us, being adversaries who contend against us, we are to be victorious over their ignorance through our knowledge, since we have already known the Inscrutable One from whom we have come forth. We have nothing in this world, lest the authority of the world that has come into being should detain us in the worlds that are in the heavens, those in which universal death exists, surrounded by the individual worldly. [We have] also become ashamed of the worlds, though we take no interest in them when they [malign] us. And we ignore them when they curse us. When they cast shame in our face, we look at them and do not speak.

For they work at their business, but we go about in hunger (and) in thirst, looking toward our dwelling-place, the place which our conduct and our conscience look toward, not clinging to the things which have come into being, but withdrawing from them. Our hearts are set on the things that exist, though we are ill (and) feeble (and) in pain. But there is a great strength hidden within us.

Our soul indeed is ill because she dwells in a house of poverty, while matter strikes blows at her eyes, wishing to make her blind. For this reason she pursues the word and applies it to her eyes as a medicine, opening them, casting away thought of a blindness in afterwards when that one is again in ignorance, he is completely darkened and is material. Thus the soul a word every hour, to apply it to her eyes as a medicine in order that she may see, and her light may conceal the hostile forces that fight with her, and she may make them blind with her light, and enclose them in her presence, and make them fall down in sleeplessness, and she may act boldly with her strength and with her scepter.

While her enemies look at her in shame, she runs upward into her treasure-house the one in which her mind is and (into) her storehouse which is secure, since nothing among the things that have come into being has seized her, nor has she received a stranger into her house. For many are her homeborn ones who fight against her by day and by night, having no rest by day or by night, for their lust oppresses them.
For this reason, then, we do not sleep, nor do we forget [the] nets that are spread out in hiding, lying in wait for us to catch us. For if we are caught in a single net, it will suck us down into its mouth, while the water flows over us, striking our face. And we will be taken down into the dragnet, and we will not be able to come up from it because the waters are high over us, flowing from above downward, submerging our heart down in the filthy mud. And we will not be able to escape from them. For man-eaters will seize us and swallow us, rejoicing like a fisherman casting a hook into the water. For he casts many kinds of food into the water because each one of the fish has his own food. He smells it and pursues its odor. But when he eats it, the hook hidden within the food没收 him and brings him up by force out of the deep waters. No man is able, then, to catch that fish down in the deep waters, except for the trap that the fisherman sets. By the ruse of food he brought the fish up on the hook.

In this very way we exist in this world, like fish. The adversary spies on us, lying in wait for us like a fisherman, wishing to seize us, rejoicing that he might swallow us. For [he places] many foods before our eyes, (things) which belong to this world. He wishes to make us desire one of them and to taste only a little, so that he may seize us with his hidden poison and bring us out of freedom and take us into slavery. For whenever he catches us with a single food, it is indeed necessary for us to desire the rest. Finally, then, such things become the food of death.

Now these are the foods with which the devil lies in wait for us. First he injects a pain into your heart until you have heartache on account of a small thing of this life, and he seizes you with his poisons. And afterwards (he injects) the desire of a tunic so that you will pride yourself in it, and love of money, pride, vanity, envy that rivals another envy, beauty of body, fraudulence. The greatest of all these are ignorance and ease.

Now all such things the adversary prepares beautifully and spreads out before the body, wishing to make the mind of the soul incline her toward one of them and overwhelm her, like a hook drawing her by force in ignorance, deceiving her until she conceives evil, and bears fruit of matter, and conducts herself in uncleanness, pursuing many desires, covetousnesses, while fleshly pleasure draws her in ignorance.

But the soul — she who has tasted these things — realized that
sweet passions are transitory. She had learned about evil: she went away from them and she entered into a new conduct. Afterwards she despises this life, because it is transitory. And she looks for those foods that will take her into life, and leaves behind her those deceitful foods. And she learns about her light, as she goes about stripping off this world, while her true garment clothes her within, (and) her bridal clothing is placed upon her in beauty of mind, not in pride of flesh. And she learns about her depth and runs into her fold, while her shepherd stands at the door. In return for all the shame and scorn, then, that she received in this world, she receives ten thousand times the grace and glory.

She gave the body to those who had given it to her, and they were ashamed, while the dealers in bodies sat down and wept because they were not able to do any business with that body, nor did they find any (other) merchandise except it. They endured great labors until they had shaped the body of this soul, wishing to strike down the invisible soul. They were therefore ashamed of their work; they suffered the loss of the one for whom they had endured labors. They did not realize that she has an invisible spiritual body, thinking, “We are her shepherd who feeds her.” But they did not realize that she knows another way, which is hidden from them. This her true shepherd taught her in knowledge.

But these - the ones who are ignorant - do not seek after God. Nor do they inquire about their dwelling-place, which exists in rest, but they go about in bestiality. They are more wicked than the pagans, because first of all they do not inquire about God, for their hardness of heart draws them down to make them their cruelty. Furthermore, if they find someone else who asks about his salvation, their hardness of heart sets to work upon that man. And if he does not stop asking, they kill him by their cruelty, thinking that they have done a good thing for themselves.

Indeed they are sons of the devil! For even the pagans give charity, and they know that God who is in the heavens exists, the Father of the universe, exalted over their idols, which they worship. But they have not heard the word, that they should inquire about his ways. Thus the senseless man hears the call, but he is ignorant of the place to which he has been called. And he did not ask during the preaching, “Where is the temple into which I should go and worship my hope?”

On account of his senselessness, then, he is worse than a pagan,
for the pagans know the way to go to their stone temple, which will perish, and they worship their idol, while their hearts are set on it because it is their hope. But to this senseless man the word has been preached, teaching him, "Seek and inquire about the ways you should go, since there is nothing else that is as good as this thing."

The result is that the substance of hardness of heart strikes a blow upon his mind, along with the force of ignorance and the demon of error. They do not allow his mind to rise up, because he was wearying himself in seeking that he might learn about his hope.

But the rational soul who (also) wearied herself in seeking — she learned about God. She labored with inquiring, enduring distress in the body, wearing out her feet after the evangelists, learning about the Inscrutable One. She found her rising. She came to rest in him who is at rest. She reclined in the bride-chamber. She ate of the banquet for which she had hungered. She partook of the immortal food. She found what she had sought after. She received rest from her labors, while the light that shines forth upon her does not sink. To it belongs the glory and the power and the revelation for ever and ever. Amen.

Authoritative Teaching
THE CONCEPT OF OUR GREAT POWER (VI,4)

Introduced by
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Translated by
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Edited by
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The Concept of Our Great Power is a Christian Gnostic "salvation history." Beginning with creation, it recounts the workings of God's justice and mercy in the conflict between good and evil, ending with the final beatitude. Unusually for a gnostic work the tractate is "apocalyptic," that is, its climax is a dramatic description of the end of the world. Even here, however, it betrays its gnostic character; in gnostic fashion it expects no general resurrection, and contemplates the salvation of nothing material.

"Our great power" is the document's supreme God. He is transcendent and "above all powers" — including the Old Testament God, the "Father of the flesh." However, he intervenes in history; it is he who builds the ark and rescues Noah from the flood.

The very first lines of the tractate make it clear that human salvation depends upon knowing our great power. As the title has probably been taken from the first line, it might well be rendered "the perception of our great power," or even "the knowledge of our great power."

In the manner typical of apocalyptic, the tractate divides all history into three "aeons." The first, the "aeon of the flesh," ends with the flood. In the second, or "psychic" aeon, the revealer appears. He is clearly meant to be the New Testament Christ, though the author avoids that title and is careful not to say explicitly that the revealer is crucified.

The second aeon ends with a war among wicked angelic rulers — the "Archons" — the appearance of an antichristlike figure, and the destruction of the world by fire. Though the fire consumes matter, it purifies souls; together with "the saints," the purified souls then live forever in the great power's "indestructible aeon."

While the tractate's message is clear in broad outline, its details are often puzzling. Some figures well known from other gnostic theology — "the Mother," for example — are mentioned but seem to play no part in the story. Incidents sometimes repeat themselves, or come at unexpected places in the narrative — thus the fire can be understood to destroy the universe twice. The transitions between episodes are often abrupt; so, likewise, are the changes in the per-
son of pronouns and the person and tense of verbs. Of a few passages it is even difficult to make connected sense.

Some of the problems can be solved simply by an attentive reading of the tractate, and a recent interpretation has presented the work as a self-consistent whole. Other investigators, however, may still feel that the document has undergone more than one redaction, or at least been extensively glossed. In particular, the question whether an original Jewish apocalypse underlies certain portions of the work seems worthy of investigation.

Even the language of the tractate, a mixture of Sahidic and Subakhmimic dialects of Coptic, calls for explanation. It may simply be that a Sahidic-speaking scribe attempted to translate a Subakhmimic writing into his own dialect. Some, however, explain the language as “proto-Sahidic,” a stage of Coptic earlier than that of the Sahidic New Testament.

Questions of the tractate’s date and provenance are bound up with those of its language and presumed literary history. If the language is felt to be proto-Sahidic, the document will be dated rather early. There is, however, an apparent reference to the Anhomoean heresy; one who sees this as stemming from the original author, rather than a glossator, will wish to place the document in the fourth century C.E.

Similar uncertainties make it difficult to determine the document’s provenance. If the statement that the Word “appeared in the east at the first” is the author’s, the tractate might come from Asia Minor. If the words in question are a gloss, there is less reason to hold this view.

THE CONCEPT OF OUR GREAT POWER

VI 36, 1-48, 15

The Perception of Understanding

The Concept (or: Thought) of the Great Power

He who will know our great Power will become invisible, and fire will not be able to consume him. But it (i.e. the fire) will purge and destroy all your (pl.) possessions. For everyone in whom my form will appear will be saved, from (the age of) seven days up to one hundred and twenty years. (Those) whom I constrained to gather all that is fallen, and the writings of our great Power, in order that he (i.e. the Power) may inscribe your (sg.) name in our great light — and their thoughts and their works may be ended, that they may be purged, and be scattered, and be destroyed, and be gathered in the place which no one in it sees. But you (pl.) will see me and you will prepare your dwelling places in our great Power.

Know how what has departed came to be, in order that you may
know how to discern what lives to become: of what appearance that aeon is, or what kind it is, or how it [will] come to be. [Why] do you not ask what [kind] you will become, (or) rather how you came to be? Discern what size the water is, that it is immeasurable (and) incomprehensible, both its beginning and its end. It supports the earth; it blows in the air where the gods and the angels are. But in him who is exalted above all these there is the fear and the light, and in him are my writings revealed. I have given them as a service to the creation of the physical things, for it is not possible for anyone to stand without that One, nor is it possible for the aeon to live without him. It is he who possesses what is in him by discerning it in purity.

Then behold the Spirit and know where he is. He gave himself to men that they may receive life from him every day, since he has his life within him; he gives to them all.

Then the darkness together with Hades took the fire. And he (i.e. the darkness) will release from himself what is mine. His eyes were not able to endure my light. After the spirits and the waters moved, the remainder came into being: the whole aeon of the creation and their (powers). [The] fire came forth from them and the Power came in the midst of the powers. And the powers desired to see my image. And the soul became its (i.e. my image's) replica.

This is the work that came into being. See what it is like, that before it comes into being it does not see, because the aeon of the flesh came to be in the great bodies. And there were apportioned to them long days in the creation. For when they had polluted themselves and had entered into the flesh, the father of the flesh, avenged himself. For when he had found that Noah was pious (and) worthy — and it is the father of the flesh who holds the angels in subjection. And he (i.e. Noah) preached piety for one hundred and twenty years. And no one listened to him. And he made a wooden ark, and whom he had found entered it. And the flood took place. And thus Noah was saved with his sons. For if (indeed) had not been meant for man to enter, then the water of the flood would not have come. In this way he intended (and) planned to save the gods and the angels, and the powers, the greatness of all of these, and the (nourishment) and the way of life. And he moves them from the aeon (and) nourishes them in the permanent places. And the judgment of the flesh was unleashed. Only the work of the Power stood up.
Next the psychic \textsuperscript{1} aeon. It is a small one, \textsuperscript{1} which is mixed with bodies, \textsuperscript{1} by begetting in the souls (and) defiling (them). \textsuperscript{20} For the first defilement of the creation \textsuperscript{1} found strength. And it begot \textsuperscript{1} every work: many works \textsuperscript{1} of wrath, anger, \textsuperscript{1} envy, malice, hatred, \textsuperscript{25} slander, contempt \textsuperscript{1} and war, lying and \textsuperscript{1} evil counsels, sorrows \textsuperscript{1} and pleasures, \textsuperscript{1} basenesses and defilements, \textsuperscript{30} falsehoods and diseases, \textsuperscript{1} evil judgments \textsuperscript{1} that they decree according to their \textsuperscript{1} desires.

Yet you are sleeping, \textbf{40} dreaming dreams. Wake up \textsuperscript{1} and return, \textsuperscript{1} taste and eat \textsuperscript{1} the true food! Hand out the word \textsuperscript{5} and the water of life! Cease \textsuperscript{1} from the evil lusts and \textsuperscript{1} desires and (the teachings of) the Anomoeans, \textsuperscript{1} evil heresies \textsuperscript{1} that have no basis.

And \textbf{10} the mother of the fire was impotent. \textsuperscript{1} She brought the fire upon the soul and \textsuperscript{1} the earth, and she burned all \textsuperscript{1} (the) dwellings \textsuperscript{1} that are in it (fem.). \textsuperscript{1} And its (fem.) shepherd perished. \textsuperscript{15} Moreover, when she does not find (anything else) to burn, \textsuperscript{1} she will destroy herself. And \textsuperscript{1} it (the fire?) will become incorporeal, \textsuperscript{1} without body, and it will burn matter, \textsuperscript{1} until it has cleansed \textsuperscript{20} everything, – and all wickedness. \textsuperscript{1} For when it does not find \textsuperscript{1} anything else to burn, it will turn \textsuperscript{1} against itself until it has destroyed itself.

Then, in this aeon, which \textsuperscript{25} is the psychic one, \textsuperscript{1} the man will come into being \textsuperscript{1} who knows the great Power. \textsuperscript{1} He will receive (me) and he will know me. \textsuperscript{1} He will drink from the milk of \textsuperscript{30} the mother, in fact. He will speak \textsuperscript{1} in parables; he will proclaim \textsuperscript{1} the aeon that is to come, \textbf{41} just as he spoke in \textsuperscript{1} the first aeon of the flesh \textsuperscript{1} as Noah. Now concerning \textsuperscript{1} his words, which he uttered, \textsuperscript{5} he spoke in all of them, \textsuperscript{1} in seventy-two tongues. \textsuperscript{1} And he opened the gates \textsuperscript{1} of the heavens with his words. \textsuperscript{1} And he put to shame the \textbf{10} ruler of Hades; he raised \textsuperscript{1} the dead, and \textsuperscript{1} he destroyed his dominion.

Then a great disturbance \textsuperscript{1} took place. \textbf{15} The archons raised up their wrath against him. \textsuperscript{1} They wanted to hand him over \textsuperscript{1} to the ruler of Hades. \textsuperscript{1} Then they recognized one of \textsuperscript{1} his followers. \textbf{20} A fire took hold of his (i.e. Judas’) \textsuperscript{1} soul. He handed \textsuperscript{1} him over, since no one knew \textsuperscript{1} him. They acted and seized \textsuperscript{1} him. They brought \textbf{25} judgment upon themselves. \textsuperscript{1} And they delivered him up \textsuperscript{1} to the ruler \textsuperscript{1} of Hades. And they handed \textsuperscript{1} him over to Sasabek \textsuperscript{30} for nine bronze coins. He prepared \textsuperscript{1} himself to go down and \textsuperscript{1} put them to shame. Then \textsuperscript{1} the ruler of Hades took him. \textbf{42} And he found that the nature of his flesh \textsuperscript{1} could not be seized, \textsuperscript{1} in order to show it to the archons. \textsuperscript{1} But he was saying: “Who is \textsuperscript{5} this? What is it? His word has \textsuperscript{1} abolished the law of the aeon. \textsuperscript{1} He is from the Logos of the power \textsuperscript{1} of life.” And he was vic-
torious over the command of the archons, and they were not able by their work to rule over him.

The archons searched after that which had come to pass. They did not know that this is the sign of their dissolution, and (that) it is the change of the aeon. The sun set during the day; that day became dark. The evil spirits were troubled. And after these things he will appear ascending. And the sign of the aeon that is to come will appear. And the aeons will dissolve.

And those who would know these things that were discussed with them, will become blessed. And they will reveal them, and they will become blessed, since they will come to know the truth. For you (pl.) have found rest in the heavens.

Then many will follow him, and they will labor in their birth places. They will go about; they will write down his words according to their desire.

Behold, these aeons have passed. What size is the water of the aeon that has dissolved? What dimensions do aeons have? How will men prepare themselves, and how will they be established, and how will they become indestructible aeons?

But at first, after his preaching — it is he who proclaims the second aeon, and the first. And the first aeon perished in the course of time. He made the first aeon, going about in it until it perished while preaching one hundred and twenty years in number. This is the perfect number that is highly exalted. He made the border of the West desolate, and he destroyed the East.

Then your (sg.) seed and those who wish to follow our great Logos and his proclamation — . Then the wrath of the archons burned. They were ashamed of their dissolution. And they fumed and were angry at the life. The cities were (overturned); the mountains dissolve. The archon came, with the archons of the western regions, to the East, i.e., that place where the Logos appeared at first. Then the earth trembled, and the cities were troubled. Moreover, the birds ate and were filled with their dead. The earth mourned together with the inhabited world; they became desolate.

Then when the times were completed, then wickedness arose mightily even until the final end of the Logos. Then the archon of the western regions arose, and from the East he will perform a work, and he will instruct men in his wickedness. And he wants to nullify all teaching, the words of true wisdom, while loving the lying wisdom. For he attacked the old, wishing to introduce wickedness and
to put on dignity. He was incapable, because the defilement of his garments is great. Then he became angry. He appeared and desired to go up and to pass up to that place.

Then the appointed time came and drew near. And he changed the commands. Then the time came until the child had grown up. When he had come to his maturity, the archons sent the imitator to that man in order that they might know our great Power. And they were expecting from him that he would perform for them a sign. And he bore great signs. And he reigned over the whole earth and all those who are under heaven. He placed his throne upon the end of the earth, for "I shall make you (sg.) god of the world." He will perform signs and wonders. Then they will turn from me, and they will go astray.

Then those men who will follow after him (i.e. the imitator) will introduce circumcision. And he will pronounce judgment upon those who are from the uncircumcision, who are the (true) people. For in fact he sent many preachers beforehand, who preached on his behalf.

When he has completed the established time of the kingdom of the earth, then the cleansing of the souls will come, since wickedness is stronger than you (pl.). All the powers of the sea will tremble and dry up. And the firmament will not pour down dew. The springs will cease. The rivers will not flow down to their springs. And the waters of the springs of the earth will cease. Then the depths will be laid bare and they will open. The stars will grow in size, and the sun will cease.

And I shall withdraw with everyone who will know me. And they will enter into the immeasurable light, (where) there is no one of the flesh nor the wantonness of the first to seize them. They will be unhindered (and) holy, since nothing drags them down. Myself I protect them, since they have holy garments, which the fire cannot touch, nor darkness nor wind nor a moment, so as to cause one to shut the eyes.

Then he will come to destroy all of them. And they will be chastised until they become pure. Moreover their period, which was given to them to have power, which was apportioned to them, (is) fourteen hundred and sixty years. When the fire has consumed them all, and when it does not find anything else to burn, then it will perish by its own hand. Then the [...] will be completed the [second] power the mercy will come through wisdom [...] Then the firmaments [will fall] down into the depth. Then [the] sons of matter will perish; they will not be, henceforth.
Then the souls will appear, \(^{10}\) who are holy through the \(^{1}\) light of the Power, who is exalted \(^{1}\) above all powers, the immeasurable, \(^{1}\) the universal one, \(^{1}\) and \(^{1}\) all those who will know me. \(^{15}\) And they will be in the aeon \(^{1}\) of beauty of \(^{1}\) the aeon of judgment, since they are ready \(^{1}\) in wisdom, having given glory \(^{1}\) to him who is in the \(^{20}\) incomprehensible unity; and they \(^{1}\) see him because of his will, \(^{1}\) which is in them. And \(^{1}\) they all have become as reflections \(^{1}\) in his light. They \(^{25}\) all have shone, and they have found rest \(^{1}\) in his rest. \(^{1}\)

And he will release the souls that \(^{1}\) are being punished, \(^{1}\) and they will come to be \(^{30}\) in purity. And they will \(^{1}\) see the saints and \(^{1}\) cry out to them, \(^{1}\) "Have mercy on us, O Power who art above \(^{1}\) all powers." For \(^{48}\) [...] and in the tree \(^{1}\) [of] iniquity that exists \(^{1}\) [...] to him their eyes. \(^{1}\) [And they] do not seek him \(^{5}\) because they do not seek us \(^{1}\) nor do they believe us, \(^{1}\) but they acted according to the creation of \(^{1}\) the archons and its other rulers. \(^{1}\) But we have acted according to our \(^{10}\) birth of the flesh, in the creation \(^{1}\) of the archons, which gives law. \(^{1}\) We also have come to be \(^{1}\) in the unchangeable aeon. \(^{1}\)

The Concept of Our Great \(^{15}\)

Power
PLATO, REPUBLIC 588A-589B (VI,5)

Introduced by
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Translated by
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Edited by
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Tractate VI,5 is a Coptic version of part (588A-589B, not, as formerly, 588B) of Socrates' parable in the ninth book of Plato's Republic, in which the human soul is likened to a trichotomous hybrid of different forces: a hybrid composed of a many-headed beast, representing the baser passions; a lion, representing the nobler passion courage; and man, representing the outermost element, reason. The fact of the excerption of the parable as an independent unit, perhaps originally in some philosophical anthology, is made understandable by its great popularity among late antique authors, especially Neoplatonists, who frequently cite or allude to it. What has proved more difficult to account for is the extent to which the Coptic version deviates from the Greek original. So much does it deviate from what Plato wrote that the tractate's first editors (1971) did not recognize it for what it is. The deviation has been accounted for in two ways. In the first, it is viewed as the product of inept translation (so Schenke, who first recognized the tractate's Platonic identity in 1974, and Brashler). In the second, it is viewed as the product of gnosticizing redaction of the Greek original, a redacted version which was then translated into Coptic (so Orlandi). These explanations are obviously not mutually exclusive, and the truth may therefore be a mixture of both (so Jackson and Painchaud). An additional element is doubtless also the incapability of the Coptic language to render the complexities and niceties of Plato's style. The question who the gnosticizing redactor may have been is not readily answerable, since many late antique groups with world-denying and ascetic inclinations revered Plato and shared technical terminology. It may have been Hermetists, especially as Hermetic tractates (VI,6,7,8) follow our tractate, in which case VI,5-8 would have come to the Coptic translator as a group. But gnostic tractates precede VI,5, and the repeated allusion, for example, to "images" and the references in 50,24-33 to the weakness of man (or the [primal] Man) with regard to the images of the evil beast and the lion and his initial fall into their clutches, together with the directive to him to cast down and trample the images, suggests a specifically gnostic setting, perhaps even more explicitly a Manichaean one.
"Since we have come to this point in a discussion, let us again take up the first things that were said to us. And we will find that he says, 'Good is he who has been done injustice completely. He is glorified justly.' Is not this how he was reproached?"

"This is certainly the fitting way!"

And I said, "Now then, we have spoken because he said that he who does injustice and he who does justice each has a force."

"How then?"

"He said, 'An image that has no likeness is the rationality of the soul,' so that he who said these things will understand. He or not? We is for me. But all who told them ruler, these now have become natural creatures – even Chimaera and Cerberus and all the rest that were mentioned. They all came down and they cast off forms and images. And they all became a single image. It was said, 'Work now!' Certainly it is a single image that became the image of a complex beast with many heads. Some days indeed it is like the image of a wild beast. Then it is able to cast off the first image. And all these hard and difficult forms emanate from it with effort, since these are formed now with arrogance. And also all the rest that are like them are formed now through the word. For now it is a single image. For the image of the lion is one thing and the image of the man is another. single single much more complex than the first. And the second is small."

"It has been formed."

"Now then, join them to each other and make them a single one – for they are three – so that they grow together and all are in a single image outside of the image of the man just like him who is unable to see the things inside him. But what is outside only is what he sees. And it is apparent what creature his image is in and that he was formed in a human image.

"And I spoke to him who said that there is profit in the doing of injustice for the man. He who does injustice truly does not profit nor does he benefit. But what is profitable for him is this: that he cast down every image of the evil beast and trample them along with the images of the lion. But the man is in weakness in this regard. And
all the things that he does are weak. As a result he is drawn to the place where he spends time with them. And he to him in [...]. But he brings about enmity. And with strife they devour each other among themselves. Yes, all these things he said to everyone who praises the doing of injustice.”

“Then is it not profitable for him who speaks justly?”

“And if he does these things and speaks in them, within the man they take hold firmly. Therefore especially he strives to take care of them and he nourishes them just like the farmer nourishes his produce daily. And the wild beasts keep it from growing.”
THE DISCOURSE ON THE EIGHTH AND NINTH
(VI,6)

Introduced by

DOUGLAS M. PARROTT

Translated by

JAMES BRASHLER, PETER A. DIRKSE, and DOUGLAS M. PARROTT

Although its title is lost, this tractate has been identified as Hermetic from the
use of the names Trismegistus and Hermes and close similarities with previously
known Hermetic tractates. It has been named from its contents, using a phrase
found in the tractate itself (53,24-26). It describes in dialogue form the process
by which a spiritual guide (mystagogue) leads an initiate to a mystical experience.

The eighth and the ninth indicate the eighth and ninth spheres surrounding the
earth. In ancient times it was thought that the first seven spheres were the realms
of the sun, moon, and planets, the lower powers whose control over human life
was not necessarily benevolent. The eighth and ninth spheres thus designate the
beginning of the divine realm, the levels beyond the control of the lower powers.
At death the soul would journey through the seven spheres, and after successful
passage it would reach the eighth and the ninth, the levels at which the soul could
experience true bliss. Furthermore, the eighth and the ninth spheres can also in­
dicate advanced stages of spiritual development. The tractate possibly assumes
yet another sphere, a higher, tenth sphere, where God himself dwells, though this
is not entirely clear.

The tractate begins with an introductory discussion (52,2-53,21) in which the
initiate secures the approval of the mystagogue to request the experience of the
eighth and the ninth. He then makes the formal request (53,24-27). The process
leading to the experience begins with a period of instruction, which culminates
in a carefully constructed prayer, perhaps spoken by both participants
(53,28-57,25). At the heart of the prayer is a request for the visionary experience
(57,3-9). Following an embrace between initiate and mystagogue, the mysta­
gogue has his vision (57,28-58,22). Then, directed by the mystagogue, the initiate
enters first the eighth, and then the ninth (58,22-60,1).

Following that, the mystagogue exhorts the initiate to silence and gives instruc­
tion about continuing in the way of the mystical experience (60,1-10). The trac­
tate concludes with a hymn of thanks by the initiate, and instructions for writing
and preserving the account of the experience (60,10-63,32).

Assumed in the tractate are earlier levels of spiritual attainment. They are not
described in Disc. 8-9 but it is clear that two things need to have occurred in order
to be ready for the experience of the eighth and ninth: the attainment of purity
of life according to the standard of divine law (56,27-57,1) and the banishing of
ignorance by mastering the knowledge found in certain books (54,6-18).
The attainment of the final two stages for the initiate requires that the mystagogue have the experience first and thereby become the embodiment of universal mind, which is the ninth (58,1-22). The initiate then enters the eighth by recognizing the presence of universal mind, and responds to this recognition by joining the chorus of the eighth and singing a silent hymn to universal mind. He reaches the ninth when he experiences his own unity with universal mind and receives the confirmatory vision in which the chorus of the eighth sings to him (59,24-60,1).

This and other Hermetic tractates may well have been used in the context of small groups devoted to secret knowledge and mystical experience, in which those who were more advanced would teach and direct neophytes, and in which certain cultic acts were engaged in (prayers and hymns are found throughout the Hermetic corpus). The tractates would have served as the basis for discussion and as texts for individual meditation.

Evidence that Disc. 8-9 was composed in Egypt is found in references to the city of Diospolis, as well as to hieroglyphic characters and gods with animal faces — all found in the section beginning 61,18. The designation of the mystagogue as Hermes and Trismegistus also suggests Egypt. A second-century C.E. date for the composition is possible, because of affinities with the thought of the Middle Platonist Albinus.

THE DISCOURSE ON THE EIGHTH AND NINTH

VI 52, 1-63, 32

[...] 1

"[My father], yesterday you promised [me 1 that you would bring] my mind into 1 [the] eighth and 5 afterwards you would bring me into the 1 ninth. You said that this is the 1 order of the tradition."

"My 1 son 1, indeed this is the order. 1 But the promise was according to 10 human nature. For I told you 1 when I initiated the promise, I 1 said, 'If you hold in mind 1 each one of the steps.' 1 After I had received the spirit through the power, 15 I set forth the action for you. 1 Indeed the understanding dwells 1 in you; in me (it is) as though 1 the power were pregnant. 1 For when I conceived from the fountain 20 that flowed to me, I gave birth." 1

"My father, you have spoken every word 1 well to me. But I am amazed 1 at this statement that you have just 1 made. For you said, 'The 25 power that is in me —.'" 1

He said, "I gave birth to it (the power), as 1 children are born."

"Then, my 1 father, I have many brothers, if 1 I am to be numbered among the offspring." 30

"Right, my son! This 1 good thing is numbered by 53 [...] 4 And
Therefore, my son, it is necessary for you to recognize your brothers and to honor them rightly and properly, because they come from the same father. For each generation I have called. I have named it, because they were offspring like these sons.'

"Then, my father, do they have (a) day?"

"My son, they are spiritual ones. For they exist as forces that grow other souls. Therefore I say that they are immortal."'

"Your word is true; it has no refutation from now on. My father, begin the discourse on the eighth and the ninth, and include me also with my brothers."

"Let us pray, my son, to the father of the universe, with your brothers who are my sons, that he may give the spirit of eloquence."

"How do they pray, my father, when joined with the generations? I want to obey, my father."

"But it is a. Nor is it. But he is satisfied with it (fem.). [...] it (masc.). And it is right [for you] to remember the progress that came to you as wisdom in the books. My son, compare yourself to the early years of life. As children (do), you have posed senseless, unintelligent questions."

"My father, the progress that has come to me now and the foreknowledge, according to the books, that has come to me, exceeding the deficiency — these things are foremost in me."

"My son, when you understand the truth of your statement, you will find your brothers, who are my sons, praying with you."

"My father, I understand nothing else except the beauty that came to me in the books."

"This is what you call the beauty of the soul, the edification that came to you in stages. May the understanding come to you, and you will teach."

"I have understood, my father, each one of the books. And especially the (fem.) which is in [...]"

"My son, in praises from [those who] extolled [them]."

"My father, from you I will receive the [power] of the discourse that you will give. As it was told to both (of us), let us pray, my father."

"My son, what is fitting is to pray to God with all our mind and all our heart and our soul, and to ask him that the gift of the eighth extend to us, and that each one receive from him what is his.
Your part, then, is to understand; my own is to be able to deliver the discourse from the fountain that flows to me.”

“Let us pray, my father: I call upon you, who rules over the kingdom of power, whose word comes as (a) birth of light. And his words are immortal. They are eternal and unchanging. He is the one whose will begets life for the forms in every place. His nature gives form to substance. By him the souls of [the eighth and] the angels are moved [...]. Those that exist. His providence extends to everyone [...]. He is the one who [.....] the aeon among spirits. He created everything. He who is self-contained cares for everything. He is perfect, the invisible God to whom one speaks in silence — his image is moved when it is directed, and it governs — the one mighty power, who is exalted above majesty, who is better than the honored (ones), Zoxathazo a òò ãò ææ ææ ææ ææ ææ òò 0000000 0000000000000000 Zozazoth.

“Lord, grant us a wisdom from your power that reaches us, so that we may describe to ourselves the vision of the eighth and the ninth. We have already advanced to the seventh, since we are pious and walk in your law. And your will we fulfill always. For we have walked in [your way, and we have] renounced [...], so that your [vision] may come. Lord, grant us the truth in the image. Allow us through the spirit to see the form of the image that has no deficiency, and receive the reflection of the pleroma from us through our praise.

“And acknowledge the spirit that is in us. For from you the universe received soul. For from you, the unbegotten one, the begotten one came into being. The birth of the self-begotten one is through you, the birth of all begotten things that exist. Receive from us these spiritual sacrifices, which we send to you with all our heart and our soul and all our strength. Save that which is in us and grant us the immortal wisdom.”

“Let us embrace each other affectionately, my son. Rejoice over this! For already from them the power, which is light, is coming to us. For I see! I see indescribable depths. How shall I tell you, my son? [...]. I am Mind and] I see another Mind, the one that [moves] the soul! I see the one that moves me from pure forgetfulness. You give me power! I see myself! I want to speak! Fear restrains me. I have found the beginning of the power that is above all powers, the one that has no beginning. I see a fountain bubbling with life. I have
said, my son, that I am Mind. I have seen! Language is not able to reveal this. For the entire eighth, my son, and the souls that are in it, and the angels, sing a hymn in silence. And I, Mind, understand.

“What is the way to sing a hymn through it (silence)?”

“Have you become such that you cannot be spoken to?”

“I am silent, my father. I want to sing a hymn to you while I am silent.”

“Then sing it, for I am Mind.”

“I understand Mind, Hermes, who cannot be interpreted, because he keeps within himself. And I rejoice, my father, because I see you smiling. And the universe rejoices. Therefore there is no creature that will lack your life. For you are the lord of the citizens in every place. Your providence protects. I call you father, aeon of the aeons, great divine spirit. And by a spirit he gives rain upon everyone. What do you say to me, my father, Hermes?”

“Concerning these things I do not say anything, my son. For it is right before God that we keep silent about what is hidden.”

“Trismegistus, let not my soul be deprived of the great divine vision. For everything is possible for you as master of the universe.”

“Return to praising, my son, and sing while you are silent. Ask what you want in silence.”

When he had finished praising he shouted, “Father Trismegistus! What shall I say? We have received this light. And I myself see this same vision in you. And I see the eighth and the souls that are in it and the angels singing a hymn to the ninth and its powers. And I see him who has the power of them all, creating those in the spirit.”

“It is advantageous from now on that we keep silence in a reverent posture. Do not speak about the vision from now on. It is proper to sing a hymn to the father until the day to quit (the) body.”

“What you sing, my father, I too want to sing.”

“I am singing a hymn within myself. While you rest yourself, be active in praise. For you have found what you seek.”

“But it is proper, my father, that I praise because I am filled in my heart?”

“What is proper is your praise that you will sing to God so that it might be written in this imperishable book.”

“I will offer up the praise in my heart, as I pray to the end of the universe and the beginning of the beginning, to the object of man’s quest, the immortal discovery, the begetter of light and truth, the
sower of reason, the love of immortal life. No hidden word will be able to speak about you, Lord. Therefore my mind wants to sing a hymn to you daily. I am the instrument of your spirit; Mind is your plectrum. And your counsel plucks me. I see myself! I have received power from you. For your love has reached us.'

"Right, my son."

"Grace! After these things I give thanks by singing a hymn to you. For I have received life from you, when you made me wise. I praise you. I call your name that is hidden within me: a ō ee ē ēē ēōō iii ōōōō ooooo ōōōʾōō uuuuuu ōʾōōōōōōōōʾōōōōōō15ōō. You are the one who exists with the spirit. I sing a hymn to you reverently."

"My son, write this book for the temple at Diospolis in hieroglyphic characters, entitling it 'The Eighth Reveals the Ninth.'"

"I will do it, my (father), as you command now."

"My son, write the language of the book on steles of turquoise. My son, it is proper to write this book on steles of turquoise, in hieroglyphic characters. For Mind himself has become overseer of these. Therefore I command that this teaching be carved on stone, and that you place it in my sanctuary. Eight guardians guard it with[...] of the Sun. The males on the right are frog-faced, and the females on the left are cat-faced. And put a square milk-stone at the base of the turquoise tablets and write the name on the azure stone tablet in hieroglyphic characters. My son, you will do this when I am in Virgo, and the sun is in the first half of the day, and fifteen degrees have passed by me."

"My father, everything that you say I will do eagerly."

"And write an oath in the book, lest those who read the book bring the language into abuse, and not (use it) to oppose the acts of fate. Rather, they should submit to the law of God, without having transgressed at all, but in purity asking God for wisdom and knowledge. And he who will not be begotten at the start by God comes to be by the general and guiding discourses. He will not be able to read the things written in this book, although his conscience is pure within him, since he does not do anything shameful, nor does he consent to it. Rather, by stages he advances and enters into the way of immortality. And thus he enters into the understanding of the eighth that reveals the ninth."

"So shall I do it, my father."

"This is the oath: I make him who will read this holy book swear by heaven and earth and fire and water and seven rulers of substance
and the creating spirit in them and the (unbegotten) God and the self-begotten one and him who has been begotten, that he will guard the things that Hermes has said. And those who keep the oath, God will be reconciled with them and everyone whom we have named. But wrath will come to each one of those who violate the oath. This is the perfect one who is, my son."
THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (VI,7)

Introduced and translated by

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This short, almost perfectly preserved Hermetic prayer expresses in carefully constructed liturgical language the gratitude of one who has received deifying knowledge. Although set off with decorations like those regularly used with titles in the Nag Hammadi codices, the heading, "This is the prayer that they spoke," was originally only an introductory line. Together with the concluding statement, this heading forms a narrative framework for the prayer.

The scribal note, which immediately follows The Prayer of Thanksgiving, shows that the prayer was contributed by the copyist, who had a collection of Hermetic materials. Presumably he thought that the prayer was an appropriate way to conclude the account of the mystical experience described in VI,6. The note suggests that after he had copied the prayer, the copyist was uncertain whether he should have done it, and was seeking in an oblique way to justify his action (rather than being bold, he was in fact restrained!). His action may have been responsible for an unusual crowding of the Coptic text in the remaining pages of the codex. The theory that the scribal note refers to VI,8 was based on the mistaken supposition that the note was written over the erased title of VI,8 after VI,8 was copied (see introduction to VI,8).

Version VI,7 is one of three versions of the Hermetic Prayer of Thanksgiving. The context of the prayer is different in each case. In the Greek text called Papyrus Mimaut, it is part of a long prayer embedded in a magical composition. In the Latin Asclepius, it forms the conclusion of the tractate. And here it is appended to another Hermetic tractate. This suggests that it was originally an independent piece of tradition.

Pr. Thanks, is especially significant for the clear evidence it presents of the existence of Hermetic cultic practices. The prayer itself reflects liturgical usage, as its balanced language attests. Moreover, the concluding statement mentions a ritual embrace or kiss (also found in VI,6 at 57,26-27) after the prayer, and a cultic meal. These references to cultic practices suggest that the primary Sitz im Leben of Pr. Thanks, was a Hermetic community dedicated to the encouragement of the visionary experience alluded to in 64,16-17 and the preservation of the mystical knowledge communicated in that experience. While it is not possible to assign a date to such communities, it is reasonable to assume that they flourished in the second and third centuries C.E. and possibly even earlier.
THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (VI, 7)

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

VI 63, 33-65, 7

This is the prayer that they spoke: 1 "We give thanks to You! Every soul 35 and heart is lifted up to You, undisturbed name, honored with the name God and praised with the name Father, for to everyone and everything (comes) the fatherly kindness and affection and love, and any teaching there may be that is sweet and plain, giving us mind, speech, (and) knowledge: mind, so that we may understand You, speech, so that we may expound You, knowledge, so that we may know You. 15 We rejoice, having been illuminated by Your knowledge. We rejoice because You have shown us Yourself. We rejoice because while we were in (the) body, You have made us divine through Your knowledge. 20

"The thanksgiving of the man who attains to You is one thing: that we know You. We have known You, intellectual light. Life of life, we have known You. Womb of every creature, we have known You. Womb pregnant with the nature of the Father, we have known You. Eternal permanence of the begetting Father, thus have we worshipped Your goodness. There is one petition that we ask: we would be preserved in knowledge. And there is one protection that we desire: that we not stumble in this kind of life."

When they had said these things in the prayer, they embraced each other and they went to eat their holy food, which has no blood in it.

SCRIBAL NOTE (VI, 7a)

VI 65, 8-14

I have copied this one discourse of his. Indeed, very many have come to me. I have not copied them because I thought that they had come to you (pl.). Also, I hesitate to copy these for you because, perhaps they have (already) come to you, and the matter may burden you. Since the discourses of that one, which have come to me, are numerous . . .
ASCLEPIUS 21-29 (VI,8)

Introduced and translated by

JAMES BRASHLER, PETER A. DIRKSE, and DOUGLAS M. PARROTT

The Hermetic tractate Asclepius was composed in Greek but exists in complete form only in a Latin translation. It was originally called The Perfect Teaching. VI,8 is a Coptic translation of a large selection from the middle portion of the tractate. It differs from the Latin at many points, but is still recognizably from the same source as the Latin because of the similarity of contents and the way they are ordered. Two Greek passages from the middle section of Asclepius have survived, and VI,8 is stylistically closer to them than to the rather expansive and rhetorical Latin.

VI,8 has no title, either at the beginning or the end, which makes it unique in the codex. It has been suggested that a title might have been erased at the beginning of the tractate and replaced by the scribal note, which is found there, but close examination of the manuscript shows that to be unlikely. Since the scribal note suggests that The Prayer of Thanksgiving (VI,7) is the copyist's insertion, it is possible that VI,8 may originally have been a continuation of VI,6 (Disc. 8-9). In that event, the now lost title of VI,6 could have served for it as well.

The tractate is in the form of a dialogue between an Hermetic initiate, Asclepius (two others, Tat and Amon, are mentioned in 72,30-31), and the mystagogue, Trismegistus (designated as Hermes in other Hermetic tractates). Asclepius as a whole was probably used in an instructional-cultic context (see introduction to VI,6). The contents are arranged in five general areas.

1) 65,15-37. The mystery experience (here undescribed) is likened to sexual intercourse, in that it requires an intimate interaction between two parties in which (according to Trismegistus' view) each receives something from the other.

2) 65,37-68,19. Discussion of the separation between the pious and the impious, with the former being distinguished by having learning and knowledge, and the latter, ignorance. Man needs learning and knowledge to restrain harmful passions and to become good and immortal. Indeed, with learning and knowledge man becomes better than the gods, since then he is both mortal and immortal.

3) 68,20-70,2. Trismegistus argues that men create gods according to human likenesses.

4) 70,3. This marks the beginning of the apocalyptic section. It seems to extend only to 74,6, in contrast to the Latin Asclepius, where it clearly continues through 331,11 (parallel to 74,11). Here are described the woes that will come upon Egypt and the final action of the creator god to end them and bring the universe to birth. This section was probably originally independent. There are a significant number of parallels to Egyptian conceptions, which can be traced back to the Ptolemaic period and before. But parallels are also found to Plato, Stoicism, the Sibylline Oracles, and the New Testament. Some have held that the apocalypse was originally a Jewish writing, while others suggest that it was ori-
originally Egyptian because of the greater number and antiquity of these parallels. The two concepts need not be mutually exclusive in view of the large, ancient, and literarily active Jewish community in Egypt.

5) 74,7-78,42. Discussion of the ultimate fate of the individual. The restoration of the nature of the pious ones is founded upon the eternal will of God, which expresses itself in the design of the good universe. The plan of the universe is then described. The "heights of heaven" are controlled by God. Other areas, including the earth, are controlled by other gods. Every person must go to the city in the west (place of the dead?). The soul separates from the body and goes to "the middle of the air" to be judged by the great daimon, who determines reward or punishment.

The Latin Asclepius is one of a group of Hermetic tractates that stands between those Hermetic tractates that are pantheistic, and hence distinctively Hellenistic, and those that are dualistic. The tractates in this group contain a mixture of both emphases. In addition to Asclepius they are Corp. Herm. IX, X, and XII. The excerpt from Asclepius that is VI,8 has both pantheism and dualism. The pantheism is explicitly expressed in 75,10-11 ("He [God] is in every place, and he looks out over every place."). It can also be seen in the conviction that the universe is good (74,33-36) and that the demiurge and the earth goddess are beneficent (75,13-24), as well as in the panegyric on Egypt (70,3-9). The dualism is found in the discussion of the two natures of man (66,9-67,34), but whether this should be attributed to Gnosticism, as some have thought, or is merely an expression of the dualism common in the Graeco-Roman world generally, is not clear.

The pantheism mentioned above, with its positive evaluation of the world, has presented a problem for those who assume that Codex VI, as a collection, had its origin among Gnostics. It has been suggested that perhaps the pantheistic parts were disregarded by the collector, who was interested in the dualism. The pantheistic elements, however, could have been deleted. It seems better to suppose that the codex may not have had its origin among Gnostics. Among its eight tractates, it contains two other Hermetic pieces (tractates 6 and 7), a garbled selection from Plato's Republic (tractate 5), a non-gnostic account of apostolic activity (tractate 1), and a tractate that has no clear indication of gnostic influence (tractate 2). Of the remaining two tractates (3 and 4), the first has been called questionably gnostic, and only the second seems to contain distinctively gnostic ideas. Thus, when the contents of the codex as a whole are considered, one has the impression of a miscellaneous collection of spiritual pieces without any clear ideological tendency running throughout. The one common theme may be the ultimate fate of the individual — the theme with which Asclepius 21-29, and therefore the codex as a whole, ends. There is probably no way to know how the codex found its way into a collection of predominantly gnostic works.
"And if you (sg.) wish to see the reality of this mystery, then you should see the wonderful representation of the intercourse that takes place between the male and the female. For when the semen reaches the climax, it leaps forth. In that moment the female receives the strength of the male; the male for his part receives the strength of the female, while the semen does this.

"Therefore the mystery of intercourse is performed in secret, in order that the two sexes might not disgrace themselves in front of many who do not experience that reality. For each of them (the sexes) contributes its (own part in) begetting. For if it happens in the presence of those who do not understand the reality, (it is) laughable and unbelievable. And, moreover, they are holy mysteries, of both words and deeds because not only are they not heard but also they are not seen.

"Therefore such people (the unbelievers) are blasphemers. They are atheistic and impious. But the others are not many; rather, the pious who are counted are few. Therefore wickedness remains among (the) many, since learning concerning the things which are ordained does not exist among them. For the knowledge of the things which are ordained is truly the healing of the passions of the matter. Therefore learning is something derived from knowledge.

"But if there is ignorance, and learning does not exist in the soul of man, (then) the incurable passions persist in it (the soul). And additional evil comes with them (the passions) in the form of an incurable sore. And the sore constantly gnaws at the soul and through it the soul produces worms from the evil and stinks. But God is not the cause of these things, since he sent to men knowledge and learning."

"Trismegistus, did he send them to men alone?"

"Yes, Asclepius, he sent them to them (men) alone. And it is fitting that we tell you why to men alone he granted knowledge and learning, the allotment of his good.

"And now listen! God and the Father, even the Lord, created man subsequent to the gods, and he took him from the region of matter. [Since] matter is involved in the creation of man, of [...], the passions are in it. Therefore they continually flow over his body, for
this living creature would not have existed in any other way except that he had taken this food, since he is mortal. It is also inevitable that inopportune desires, which are harmful, dwell in him. For the gods, since they came into being out of a pure matter, do not need learning and knowledge. For the immortality of the gods is learning and knowledge, since they came into being out of pure matter. It (immortality) assumed for them the position of knowledge and learning. By necessity he (God) set a boundary for man; he placed him in learning and knowledge.

"Concerning these things (learning and knowledge), which we have mentioned from the beginning, he perfected them in order that by means of these things he might restrain passions and evils, according to his will. He brought his (man's) mortal existence into immortality; he (man) became good (and) immortal, just as I have said. For he (God) created for him: the immortal and the mortal.

"And it happened this way because of the will of [God] that men be better than the gods, since indeed [the] gods are immortal, but men alone are both immortal and mortal. Therefore man has become akin to the gods, and they know the affairs of each other with certainty. The gods know the things of men, and men know the things of the gods. And I am speaking about men, Asclepius, who have attained learning and knowledge. But (about) those who are more vain than these, it is not fitting that we say anything base, since we are divine and are introducing holy matters.

"Since we have entered the matter of the communion between the gods and men, know, Asclepius, that in which man can be strong! For just as the Father, the Lord of the universe, creates gods, in this very way man too, this mortal, earthly, living creature, the one who is not like God, also himself creates gods. Not only does he strengthen, but he is also strengthened. Not only is he god, but he also creates gods. Are you astonished, Asclepius? Are you yourself another disbeliever like the many?"

"Trismegistus, [I agree with] the words (spoken) to me. [And] I believe you as you [speak]. But I have also been astonished at the discourse about [this]. And I have decided that man is blessed, since he has enjoyed this great power."

"And that which is greater than all these things, Asclepius, is worthy of admiration. Now it is clear to us concerning the race of the gods, and we confess it along with everyone else, that it (the race of
the gods) has come into being out of a pure matter. And their bodies are heads only. But that which men create is the likeness of the gods. They (the gods) are from the farthest part of the matter, and it (the object created by men) is from the outer (part) of the being of men. Not only are they (what men create) heads but (they are) also all the other members of the body and according to their likeness. Just as God has willed that the inner man be created according to his image, in the very same way man on earth creates gods according to his likeness.”

“Trismegistus you are not talking about idols, are you?”

“Asclepius, you yourself are talking about idols. You see that again you yourself, Asclepius, are also a disbeliever of the discourse. You say about those who have soul and breadth, that they are idols—these who bring about these great events. You are saying about these who give prophecies that they are idols—these who give men sickness and healing that [...].

“Or are you ignorant, Asclepius, that Egypt is (the) image of heaven? Moreover, it is the dwelling place of heaven and all the forces that are in heaven. If it is proper for us to speak the truth, our land is (the) temple of the world. And it is proper for you not to be ignorant that a time will come in it (our land when) Egyptians will seem to have served the divinity in vain, and all their activity in their religion will be despised. For all divinity will leave Egypt and will flee upward to heaven. And Egypt will be widowed; it will be abandoned by the gods. For foreigners will come into Egypt, and they will rule it. Egypt! Moreover, Egyptians will be prohibited from worshipping God. Furthermore, they will come into the ultimate punishment, especially whoever among them is found worshiping (and) honoring God. 30

“And in that day the country that was more pious than all countries will become impious. No longer will it be full of temples, but it will be full of tombs. Neither will it be full of gods but (it will be full of) corpses. Egypt! Egypt will become like the fables. And your religious objects will be [... the marvelous things] and [...], and if your words are stones and are wonderful. And the barbarian will be better than you, Egyptian, in his religion, whether (he is) a Scythian, or the Hindu, or some other of this sort.

“And what is this that I say about the Egyptian? For they (the Egyptians) will not abandon Egypt. For (in) the time (when) the gods have abandoned the land of Egypt and have fled upward to heaven, then
all Egyptians will die. And Egypt will be made a desert by the gods and the Egyptians. And as for you, River, there will be a day when you will flow with blood more than water. And dead bodies will be (stacked) higher than the dams. And he who is dead will not be mourned as much as he who is alive. Indeed the latter will be known as an Egyptian on account of his language in the second period (of time). Asclepius, why are you weeping? He will seem like (a) foreigner in regard to his customs. Divine Egypt will suffer evils greater than these. Egypt, lover of God, and the dwelling place of the gods, school of religion, will become an example of impiousness.

"And in that day the world will not be marveled at, and nor will it be worshipped since we say that it is not good. It has become neither a single thing nor a vision. But it is in danger of becoming a burden to all men. Therefore, it will be despised – the beautiful world of God, the incomparable work, the energy that possesses goodness, the many-formed vision, the abundance that does not envy, that is full of every vision. Darkness will be preferred to light and death will be preferred to life. No one will gaze into heaven. And the pious man will be counted as insane, and the impious man will be honored as wise. The man who is afraid will be considered as strong. And the good man will be punished like a criminal.

"And concerning the soul, and the things of the soul, and the things of immortality, along with the rest of what I have said to you, Tat, Asclepius, and Ammon, not only will they be considered ridiculous, but they will also be thought of as vanity. But believe me (when I say) that people of this kind will be endangered by the ultimate danger to their soul. And a new law will be established. They will good. [The] wicked angels will remain among men, (and) be with them (and) lead them into wicked things recklessly, as well as into atheism, wars, and plunderings, by teaching them things contrary to nature.

"In those days the earth will not be stable, nor will they know the stars in heaven. Every sacred voice of the word of God will be silenced, and the air will be diseased. Such is the senility of the world: atheism, dishonor, and the disregard of noble words.

"And when these things had happened, Asclepius, then the Lord, the Father and god from the only first (God), god the creator, when he looked upon the things that happened, established his design,
which is good, against the disorder. He took away error, and cut off evil. Sometimes he submerged it in a great flood, at other times he burned it in a searing fire, and at still other times he crushed it in wars and plagues, until he brought of the work. And this is the birth of the world.

"The restoration of the nature of the pious ones who are good will take place in a period of time that never had a beginning. For the will of God has no beginning, even as his nature, which is his will, (has no beginning). For the nature of God is will. And his will is the good."

"Trismegistus, is purpose, then, will?"

"Yes, Asclepius, since will is (included) in counsel. For does not will what he has from deficiency. Since he is complete in every part, he wills what he (already) fully has. And he has every good. And what he wills, he wills. And he has the good that he wills. Therefore he has everything. And God wills what he wills. And the good world is an image of the Good One."

"Trismegistus, is the world good?"

"Asclepius, it is good, as I shall teach you. For just as of soul and life of the world come forth in matter, [those that are good], the change of the climate, and [the] beauty and the ripening of the fruits, and the things similar to all these. Because of this, God has control over the heights of heaven. He is in every place and he looks out over every place. And (in) his place there is neither heaven nor star. And he is free from (the) body.

"Now the creator has control in the place that is between the earth and heaven. He is called Zeus, that is, life. Plutonius Zeus is lord over the earth and sea. And he does not possess the nourishment for all mortal living creatures, for (it is) Kore who bears the fruit. These forces always are powerful in the circle of the earth, but those of others are always from Him-who-is.

"And the lords of the earth will withdraw themselves. And they will establish themselves in a city that is in a corner of Egypt and that will be built toward the setting of the sun. Every man will go into it, whether they come on the sea or on the shore."

"Trismegistus, where will these be settled now?"

"Asclepius, in the great city that is on the mountain it frightens as a great evil, in ignorance of the matter. For death occurs, [which] is the dissolution of the labors of the body and (the dissolution of) the number (of the body), when it (death)
completes the number of the body. For the number is the union of the body. Now the body dies when it is not able to support the man. And this is death: the dissolution of the body and the destruction of the sensation of the body. And it is not necessary to be afraid of this, nor because of this, but because of what is not known and is disbelieved (one is afraid)."

"But what is not known or is disbelieved!"

"Listen, Asclepius! There is a great demon. The great God has appointed him to be overseer or judge over the souls of men. And God has placed him in the middle of the air between the earth and heaven. Now, when the soul comes forth from (the) body, it is necessary that it meet this daimon. Immediately he (the daimon) will surround this one (masc.), and he will examine him in regard to the character that he has developed in his life. And if he finds that he piously performed all of his actions for which he came into the world, this (daimon) will allow him turn him. But [if he sees] in this one he brought his life into evil deeds, he grasps him, as he [flees] upward and throws him down so that he is suspended between heaven and earth and is punished with a great punishment. And he will be deprived of his hope and be in great pain.

"And that soul has been put neither on the earth nor in heaven. But it has come into the open sea of the air of the world, the place where there is a great fire, and crystal water, and furrows of fire, and a great upheaval. The bodies are tormented in various ways. Sometimes they are cast upon raging waters; at other times they are cast down into the fire in order that it may destroy them. Now, I will not say that this is the death of the soul, for it has been delivered from evil, but it is a death sentence.

"Asclepius, it is necessary to believe these things and to fear them in order that we might not encounter them. For unbelievers are impious and commit sin. Afterwards they will be compelled to believe, and they will not hear by word of mouth only, but will experience the reality itself. For they kept believing that they would not endure these things. Not only 78. First, [Asclepius], all [those of the earth die and those who are of the] body cease with these of this sort. For those who are here are not like those who are there. So with the daimons who men, they despite there. Thus it is not the same. But truly the gods who are here will punish more whoever has hidden it here every day."

"Trismegistus, what [is the] character of the iniquity that is there?"
"Now you think, Asclepius, that when one takes something in a temple, he is impious. For that kind of a person is a thief and a bandit. And this matter concerns gods and men. But do not compare those here with those of the other place. Now I want to speak this discourse to you confidentially; no part of it will be believed. For the souls that are filled with much evil will not come and go in the air, but they will be put in the places of the daimons, which are filled with pain, (and) which are always filled with blood and slaughter, and their food, which is weeping, mourning, and groaning."

"Trismegistus, who are these (daimons)?"

"Asclepius, they are the ones who are called stranglers, and those who roll souls down on the dirt, and those who scourge them, and those who cast into the water, and those who cast into the fire, and those who bring about the pains and calamities of men. For such as these are not from a divine soul, nor from a rational soul of man. Rather, they are from the terrible evil."
THE PARAPHRASE OF SHEM (VII, I)

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The first of the five tractates contained in Codex VII is entitled The Paraphrase of Shem. For its major part, this is an apocalypse, with the narrative frame describing the initial ascent of the seer, Shem (consistently spelled Sēem), to the top of the creation (1,5-16) and his final return to the earth (41,21-42,11). The actual revelation is provided by Derdekeas, the son of the infinite Light; it consists of a cosmogony and an anthropology (1,16-24,29), followed by a history of salvation which focuses on the account of the Flood (24,29-28,8), the destruction of Sodom (28,8-30,4), the baptism of the Savior and his ascent on the occasion of his crucifixion (30,4-40,31). The revelation concludes with an address to Shem concerning his mission on earth (40,31-41,21). To this apocalypse are added a first eschatological discourse pronounced by Derdekeas (42,11-45,31), a description of Shem's ascent to the planetary spheres at the end of his life (45,31-47,32), a second eschatological discourse of Derdekeas (47,32-48,30) and, to conclude the whole tractate, a final address to Shem (48,30-49,9).

The cosmogonic myth reported here is related to those systems which consider the universe as rooted in three principles. It opens with the description of the three great powers or roots: at the top reigns Light Infinite, called "Majesty," which is Thought filled with hearing and word; located at the bottom is Darkness, a male principle which is "wind in the waters" and possesses the Mind (nous) wrapped with the restless fire. Between these two powers is the Spirit, a quiet and humble light. The harmony which prevails at the beginning derives from the fact that each of those roots reigns in itself without mixing with the other two. It is important to note that the text makes no allusion to any previous action taken by Darkness to seize the Mind, nor does it mention a fall of the Mind. However, the events are essentially triggered by the will of the Majesty in an effort to save the Mind.

Suddenly Darkness stirs and the Spirit discovers the existence of the bad root. By the will of the Great Light the waters separate and Darkness comes up with his eye, the Mind. The Spirit reveals himself to Darkness and by doing so loses a part of his light to the benefit of the Mind.

The exalted Light then reveals himself through his son, Derdekeas. He appears in the likeness of the Spirit, thus initiating the salvation of the Mind and the ascent of the Spirit's light. In order to deceive Darkness, the Savior provokes the creation of the universe from water, part of which transforms into a giant Womb (also called "Nature"). The restless fire goes to the Womb. Fooled by the fire,
Darkness, on seeing the Womb, becomes unchaste, has intercourse with the Womb and ejaculates the Mind. Nature is then divided into four "clouds" or spheres, which are called Hymen, Chorion, Power and Water. On entering the Womb, the Mind collides with the Unbegotten Spirit and the "burden of the Mind" causes "astonishment" in the Spirit. This power of Astonishment diverts the burden of Mind to the effect that, clothed with the light of the Spirit, he takes resort to the cloud of Power (also called "the Middle"). The Astonishment, however, sticks to the cloud of Hymen.

The Spirit beseeches the infinite Light to have mercy on his own light. The Savior appears this time as a whirlwind to blow up the clouds: they divide, and the Mind takes shape. Derdekeas puts on his universal garment of light and prompts the ascent of the light from the cloud of Water. When the Spirit gives thanks to the infinite Light, his Astonishment produces a great power, Thought, the principle of the race of Shem, the pneumatics.

Now the Savior deposits his universal garment and puts on his trimorphic garment in order to bring to perfection the light in the three clouds of Hymen, Silence (Chorion), and the Middle. The light retained in the Middle is the part of light which was detached from Astonishment and is united with Mind. After the Flood, it is called "Faith."

The Savior descends to the cloud of the Middle, puts on a garment of fire and prostitutes himself with Nature. In its orgasm, the Womb casts off Mind in the form of a fish and gives birth to all sorts of beasts. Derdekeas puts on the garment of the Beast and prompts the Womb to produce heaven and earth and all kinds of seed. He also makes her give birth to female entities, the winds, and to male entities, the demons. The latter mate with the winds and thereby cast off the power they have, which is Mind. By the will of the Savior, Mind rules over the winds and the demons. He receives a likeness of fire, a light, a listening and a share of Logos. At the end of time, Mind will take his repose with Faith in the cloud of Hymen. The winds and the demons have intercourse for a second time and give birth to all sorts of impurity, that is, the material souls. Through the masturbation of one of the winds, barren women and sterile men are begotten. These are the psychics, who possess only a material soul and are bound to dissolve in Darkness. Finally the pneumatics come to existence, namely those who possess a particle of Mind and a thought from the light of Astonishment.

In order to detain the light of Faith and to destroy the pneumatic race, Nature plans to cause a flood, to which the Savior reacts by proclaiming the erection of a tower. Shem is saved and remains in a body so that he may have patience with Faith and pass on his revelation to postdiluvian mankind. In other words, during the time appointed to Faith, Shem and his race will live among the people who carry out the will of Nature through the observance of the law. For Nature uses the light of Faith under the form of the Law to keep to itself the noetic seed. After the flood, mankind in fact includes two classes of redeemed: the noetics, who possess a body, a soul, and a particle of Mind, and whose root is Faith, and pneumatics, who possess not only a particle of Mind but also a "thought" issued from Astonishment, and whose root is the Unbegotten Spirit.

The destruction of Sodom is also presented as an attempt by Nature to destroy the pneumatic seed. But Shem is told not to worry about his race, since thanks to his teaching they will bear the universal testimony and will repose in the place of the Unbegotten Spirit.
The Savior reveals himself for the last time when the demon (that is, John the Baptist) appears on the river in order to baptize. The baptismal rite is essentially bad because of its use of water — a primordial impure power, which in the beginning tried to detain the light of the Spirit and now tries to keep men prisoner through baptism. But by descending on the water, the Savior rescues the light of Faith and reveals to the pneumatics and the noetics the passwords which will allow them to pass without hindrance through the planetary spheres as they return to their proper root. Thanks to the "memorial" (or "universal testimony") the pneumatics ascend to the place of the Unbegotten Spirit; as for the noetics, they bear the "testimony of Faith" and ascend to Hymen, the place of Faith. This part of the tractate contains a harsh antibaptismal polemic, probably directed against the Great Church.

After his baptism, the Savior foretells his ascent at the end of his mission on earth. In its anger, Nature will try to seize him, but will only manage to crucify Soldas (that is, the terrestrial Jesus). The following allegory which narrates the beheading of Rebouel is intended to explain to the noetics the meaning of the crucifixion: it does not have the effect of purifying the water of baptism, but rather brings out the division between light and darkness. Just as Rebouel is declared blessed in her beheading, so the noetics should not hesitate to separate from the Great Church, which practises baptism, and enter the community of those who possess gnosia.

Former research has pointed out similarities between The Paraphrase of Shem and the tractate entitled The Paraphrase of Seth, which is referred to by the heresiologist Hippolytus in his report on the Sethians. But the differences between the two doctrines, especially with regard to anthropology, are too great to warrant the assumption of any direct or indirect link whatsoever between the two works. Likewise, more recent research tends not to regard The Paraphrase of Seth as a christianized version of The Paraphrase of Shem, which in that case could have been a witness of a pre-Christian Gnosticism.

THE PARAPHRASE OF SHEM

VII 1, 1-49, 9

The Paraphrase of Shem

[The] paraphrase which was about the unbegotten Spirit. What Derdekea revealed to me, Shem, according to the will of the Majesty. My thought which was in my body snatched me away from my race. It took me up to the top of the world, which is close to the light that shone upon the whole area there. I saw no earthly likeness, but there was light. And my thought separated from the body of darkness as though in sleep.

I heard a voice saying to me, Shem, since you are from an un-
mixed power and you are the first being upon the earth, hear and understand what I shall say to you first concerning the great powers who were in existence in the beginning, before I appeared. There was Light and Darkness and there was Spirit between them. Since your root fell into forgetfulness — he who was the unbegotten Spirit — I reveals to you the truth about the powers. The Light was thought full of hearing and word. They were united into one form. And the Darkness was a wind in waters. He possessed the mind wrapped in a chaotic fire. And the Spirit between them was a gentle, humble light. These are the three roots. They reigned each in themselves, alone. And they covered each other, each one with its power.

But the Light, since he possessed a great power, knew the abasement of the Darkness and his disorder, namely that the root was not straight. But the crookedness of the Darkness was lack of perception, namely (the illusion that) there is no one above him. And as long as he was able to bear up under his evil, he was covered with the water. And he stirred. And the Spirit was frightened by the sound. He lifted himself up to his station. And he saw a great, dark water. And he was nauseated. And the thought of the Spirit stared down; he saw the infinite Light. But he was overlooked by the putrid root. And by the will of the great Light the dark water separated. And the Darkness came up wrapped in vile ignorance, and (this was) in order that the mind might separate from him because he prided himself in it.

And when he stirred, the light of the Spirit appeared to him. When he saw it he was astonished. He did not know that another Power was above him. And when he saw that his likeness was dark compared with the Spirit, he felt hurt. And in his pain he lifted up to the height of the members of Darkness his mind which was the eye of the bitterness of evil. He caused his mind to take shape in a member of the regions of the Spirit, thinking that, by staring (down) at his evil, he would be able to equal the Spirit. But he was not able. For he wanted to do an impossible thing, and it did not take place. But in order that the mind of Darkness, which is the eye of the bitterness of evil, might not be destroyed, since he was made partially similar, he arose and shone with a fiery light upon all of Hades, so that the equality to the faultless Light might become apparent. For the Spirit made use of every form of Darkness because he appeared in his majesty.

And the exalted, infinite Light appeared, for he was very joyful.
He wished to reveal himself to the Spirit. And the likeness of the exalted Light appeared to the unbegotten Spirit. I appeared. [I] am the son of the incorruptible, infinite Light. I appeared in the likeness of the Spirit, for I am the ray of the universal Light. And his appearance to me (was) in order that the mind of Darkness might not remain in Hades. For the Darkness made himself like his mind in a part of the members. When I, (O) Shem, appeared in it (i.e. the likeness), in order that the Darkness might become dark to himself, according to the will of the Majesty — in order that the Darkness might become free from every aspect of the power which he possessed — the mind drew the chaotic fire, with which it was covered, from the midst of the Darkness and the water. And from the Darkness the water became a cloud. and from the cloud the womb took shape. The chaotic fire which was a deviation went there.

And when the Darkness saw it (i.e. the womb) he became unchaste. and when he had aroused the water, he rubbed the womb. His mind dissolved down to the depths of Nature. It mingled with the power of the bitterness of Darkness. And her (i.e. the womb's) eye ruptured at the wickedness in order that she might not again bring forth the mind. For it was a seed of Nature from the dark root. And when Nature had taken to herself the mind by means of the dark power, every likeness took shape in her. And when the Darkness had acquired the likeness of the mind, it resembled the Spirit. For Nature rose up to expel it; she was powerless against it, since she did not have a form from the Darkness. For she brought it forth in the cloud. And the cloud shone. A mind appeared in it like a frightful, harmful fire. It (i.e. the mind) collided against the unbegotten Spirit since it possessed a likeness from him. In order that Nature might become empty of the chaotic fire, then immediately Nature was divided into four parts. They became clouds which varied in their appearance. They were called Hymen, Afterbirth, Power, (and) Water. And the Hymen and the Afterbirth and the Power were chaotic fires. And it (i.e. the mind) was drawn from the midst of the Darkness and the water — since the mind was in the midst of Nature and the dark power — in order that the harmful waters might not cling to it. Because of this Nature was divided, according to my will, in order that the mind may return to its power which the dark root, which was mixed with it (i.e. the mind), had taken from it. And he (i.e. the dark root) appeared in the womb. And at the division of Nature he separated from the dark power which he possessed from
the mind. It (i.e. the mind) went into the midst of the power — this was the middle region of Nature.

And the Spirit of light, when the mind burdened him, was astonished. And the force of his Astonishment cast off the burden. And it (i.e. the burden) returned to its heat. It put on the light of the Spirit. And when Nature moved away from the power of the light of the Spirit, the burden returned. And the Astonishment of the light cast off the burden. It stuck to the cloud of the Hymen. And all the clouds of Darkness cried out, they who had separated from Hades, because of the alien Power. He is the Spirit of light who has come in them. And by the will of the Majesty the Spirit gazed up at the infinite Light, in order that his light may be pitied and the likeness brought up from Hades.

And when the Spirit had looked, I flowed out — I, the son of the Majesty — like a wave of bright light and like a whirlwind of the immortal Spirit. And I blew from the cloud of the Hymen upon the Astonishment of the unbegotten Spirit. It (i.e. the cloud) separated and cast light upon the clouds. These separated in order that the Spirit might return. Because of this the mind took shape. Its repose was shattered. For the Hymen of Nature was a cloud which cannot be grasped; it is a great fire. Similarly, the Afterbirth of Nature is the cloud of silence; it is an august fire. And the Power which was mixed with the mind, it, too, was a cloud of Nature which was joined with the Darkness that had aroused Nature to unchastity. And the dark water was a frightful cloud. And the root of Nature, which was below, was crooked, since it is burdensome and harmful. The root was blind with respect to the light-bondage which was unfathomable since it had many appearances.

And I had pity on the light of the Spirit which the mind had received. I returned to my position in order to pray to the exalted, infinite Light that the power of the Spirit might increase on the place and might be filled without dark defilement. And reverently I said, "Thou art the root of the Light. Thy hidden form has appeared, O exalted, infinite one. May the whole power of the Spirit spread and may it be filled with its light, O infinite Light. (Then) he will not be able to join with the unbegotten Spirit, and the power of the Astonishment will not be able to mix with Nature. According to the will of the Majesty," my prayer was accepted.

And the voice of the Word was heard saying through the Majesty to the unbegotten Spirit, "Behold, the power has been completed."
He who was revealed by me appeared in the Spirit. Again I shall appear. I am Derdekeas, the son of the incorruptible, infinite Light."

The light of the infinite Spirit came down to a feeble nature for a short time until all the impurity of nature became void, and in order that the darkness of Nature might be blamed. I put on my garment which is the garment of the light of the Majesty — which I am. I came in the appearance of the Spirit to consider the whole light which was in the depths of the Darkness. According to the will of the Majesty, in order that the Spirit by means of the Word might be filled with his light independently of the power of the infinite Light, and at my wish, the Spirit arose by his (own) power. His greatness was granted to him that he might be filled with his whole light and depart from the whole burden of the Darkness. For what was behind was a dark fire which blew (and) pressed on the Spirit. And the Spirit rejoiced because he was protected from the frightful water. But his light was not equal to the Majesty. But (what) he was granted by the infinite Light, (he was granted it) in order that in all his members he might appear as a single image of light. And when the Spirit arose above the water, his black likeness became apparent. And the Spirit honored the exalted Light: "Surely thou alone art the infinite one, because thou art above every unbegotten thing, for thou hast protected me from the Darkness. And at thy wish I arose above the power of darkness.

And that nothing might be hidden from you, Shem, the thought, which the Spirit from the greatness had contemplated, came into being, since the Darkness was not able [to] restrain his evil. But when it appeared, the three roots became known as they were from the beginning. If the Darkness had been able to bear up under his evil, the mind would not have separated from him, and another power would not have appeared.

But from the time it appeared I was seen, the son of the Majesty, in order that the light of the Spirit might not become faint, and that Nature might not reign over it, because it gazed at me. And by the will of the greatness my equality was revealed, that what is of the Power might become apparent. You are the great Power which came into being, and I am the perfect Light which is above the Spirit and the Darkness, the one who puts to shame the Darkness for the intercourse of the impure practice. For through the division of Nature the Majesty wished to be covered with honor up to the height of the Thought of the Spirit. And the Spirit received rest in his power.
For the image of the Light is inseparable from the unbegotten Spirit. And the lawgivers did not name him after all the clouds of Nature, nor is it possible to name them. For every likeness into which Nature had divided is a power of the chaotic fire which is the hylic seed. The one who took to himself the power of the Darkness imprisoned it in the midst of its members.

And by the will of the Majesty, in order that the mind and the whole light of the Spirit might be protected from every burden and (from) the toil of Nature, a voice came forth from the Spirit to the cloud of the Hymen. And the light of the astonishment began to rejoice with the voice which was granted to him. And the great Spirit of light was in the cloud of the Hymen. He honored the infinite Light and the universal likeness who I am, the son of the Majesty. It is said: "Anasses Duses, thou art the infinite Light who was given by the will of the Majesty to establish every light of the Spirit upon the place, and to separate the mind from the Darkness. For it was not right for the light of the Spirit to remain in Hades. For at thy wish the Spirit arose to behold thy greatness."

For I said these things to you, Shem, that you might know that my likeness, the son of the Majesty, is from my infinite Thought, since I am for him a universal likeness which does not lie, (and) I am above every truth and origin of the word. His appearance is in my beautiful garment of light which is the voice of the immeasurable Thought. We are that single, sole light which came into being. He appeared in another root in order that the power of the Spirit might be raised from the feeble Nature. For by the will of the great Light I came forth from the exalted Spirit down to the cloud of the Hymen without my universal garment.

And the Word took me to himself, from the Spirit, in the first cloud of the Hymen of Nature. And I put on this of which the Majesty and the unbegotten Spirit made me worthy. And the threefold unity of my garment appeared in the cloud, by the will of the Majesty, in a single form. And my likeness was covered with the light of my garment. And the cloud was disturbed, and it was not able to bear my likeness. It shed the first power, the one which it had taken from the Spirit, that one which shone on him from the beginning, before appeared in the word to the Spirit. The cloud would not have been able to bear both of them. And the light which came forth from the cloud passed through the silence, until it came into the middle region. And, by the will of the Majesty, the light
mixed with him (i.e.) the Spirit which exists in the silence, he who had been separated from the Spirit of light. It was separated from the light by the cloud of the silence. The cloud was disturbed. It was he who gave rest to the flame of fire. He humbled the dark womb in order that she might not reveal other seed from the darkness. He kept them back in the middle region of Nature in their position which was in the cloud. They were troubled since they did not know where they were. For still they (did) not possess the universal understanding of the Spirit.

And when I prayed to the Majesty, toward the infinite Light, that the chaotic power of the Spirit might go to and fro, and the dark womb might be idle, and that my likeness might appear in the cloud of the Hymen, as if I were wrapped in the light of the Spirit which went before me, and by the will of the Majesty and through the prayer I came in the cloud in order that through my garment — which was from the power of the Spirit — the pleroma of the word, might bring power to the members who possessed it in the Darkness. For because of them I appeared in this insignificant place. For I am a helper of every one who has been given a name. For when I appeared in the cloud, the light of the Spirit began to save itself from the frightful water, and (from) the clouds of fire which had been separated from dark Nature. And I gave them eternal honor that they might not again engage in the impure practice.

And the light which was in the Hymen was disturbed by my power, and it passed through my middle region. It was filled with the universal Thought. And through the word of the light of the Spirit it returned to its repose. It received form in its root and shone without deficiency. And the light which had come forth with it from the silence went in the middle region and returned to the place. And the cloud shone. And from it came an unquenchable fire. And the part which separated from the astonishment put on forgetfulness. It was deceived by the fire of darkness. And the shock of its astonishment cast off the burden of the cloud. It was evil since it was unclean. And the fire mixed with the water in order that the waters might become harmful.

And Nature which had been disturbed immediately arose from the idle waters. For her ascent was shameful. And Nature took to herself the power of fire. She became strong because of the light of the Spirit which was in Nature. Her likeness appeared in the water in the form of a frightful beast with many faces, which is crooked
below. A light went down to chaos filled with mist and dust, in order to harm Nature. And the light of the Astonishment which is in the middle region came to it after he cast off the burden of the Darkness. He rejoiced when the Spirit arose. For he looked from the clouds down at the dark waters upon the light which was in the depths of Nature.

Therefore I appeared that I might get an opportunity to go down to the nether world, to the light of the Spirit which was burdened, that I might protect him from the evil of the burden. And through his looking down at the dark region the light once more came up in order that the womb might again come up from the water. She (i.e. the womb) came up by my will. Guilefully the eye opened. And the light which had appeared in the middle region (and) which had separated from the Astonishment rested and shone upon her. And the womb saw things she had not seen, and she rejoiced joyfully in the light, although this was not hers — the one which appeared in the middle region, in her wickedness, when he (i.e. the light) shone upon her. And the womb saw things she had not seen, and she was brought down to the water, she was thinking that she had reached to the power of light. And she did not know that her root was made idle by the likeness of the Light, and that it was to her (i.e. the root) that he had run.

The light was astonished, the one which was in the middle region and which was beginning and end. Therefore his thought gazed directly up at the exalted Light. And he called out and said, "Lord, have mercy on me, for my light and my effort went astray. For if thy goodness does not establish me, I do not know where I am." And when the Majesty had heard him, he had mercy on him.

And I appeared in the cloud of the Hymen, in the silence, without my holy garment. With my will I honored my garment which has three forms in the cloud of the Hymen. And the light which was in the silence, the one from the rejoicing Power, contained me. I wore it. And its two parts appeared in a single form. Its other parts did not appear on account of the fire. I became unable to speak in the cloud of the Hymen, for its fire was frightful, lifting itself up without humility. And in order that my greatness and the word might appear, I placed likewise my other garment in the cloud of the silence. I went into the middle region and put on the light that was in it, that was sunk in forgetfulness and that was separated from the Spirit of astonishment, for he had cast off the burden. At my wish noth-
ing mortal appeared to him, but they were all immortal things which the Spirit granted to him. And he said in the thought of the Light, ai eis ai ou phar dou ia ei ou: I have come in a great rest in order that he may give rest to my light in his root, and may bring it out of harmful Nature.

Then, by the will of the Majesty, I took off my garment of light. I put on another garment of fire which has no form, which is from the mind of the power, which was separated, and which was prepared for me, according to my will, in the middle region. For the middle region covered it with a dark power in order that I might come and put it on. I went down to chaos to save the whole light from it. For without the power of darkness I could not oppose Nature. But I rested myself upon her staring eye which was a light from the Spirit. For it had been prepared for me as a garment and a rest by the Spirit. Through me he opened his eyes down to Hades. He granted Nature his voice for a time.

And my garment of fire, according to the will of the Majesty, went down to what is strong, and to the unclean part of Nature which was covering. And my garment rubbed Nature in her covering. And her unclean femininity was strong. And the wrathful womb came up and made the mind dry, resembling a fish which has a drop of fire and a power of fire. And when Nature had cast off the mind, she was troubled and she wept. When she was hurt, and in her tears, she cast off the power of the Spirit (and) remained as I. I put on the light of the Spirit and I rested with my garment on account of the sight of the fish.

And in order that the deeds of Nature might be condemned, since she is blind, manifold animals came out of her, in accordance with the number of the fleeting winds. All of them came into being in Hades searching for the light of the mind which took shape. They were not able to stand up against it. I rejoiced over their ignorance. They found me, the son of the Majesty, in front of the womb which has many forms. I put on the beast, and laid before her a great request that heaven and earth might come into being, in order that the whole light might rise up. For in no other way could the power of the Spirit be saved from bondage except that I appear to her in animal form. Therefore she was gracious to me as if I were her son.

And on account of my request, Nature arose since she possesses of the power of the Spirit and the Darkness and the fire. For she had
taken off her forms. When she had cast it off, she blew upon the water. The heaven was created. And from the foam of the heaven the earth came into being. And at my wish it brought forth all kinds of food in accordance with the number of the beasts. And it brought forth dew from the winds on account of you (pl.) and those who will be begotten the second time upon the earth. For the earth possessed a power of chaotic fire. Therefore it brought forth every seed.

And when the heaven and the earth were created, my garment of fire arose in the midst of the cloud of Nature (and) shone upon the whole world until Nature became dry. The Darkness which was its (i.e. the earth's) garment was cast into the harmful waters. The middle region was cleansed from the Darkness. But the womb grieved because of what had happened. She perceived in her parts what was water like a mirror. When she perceived (it), she wondered how it had come into being. Therefore she remained a widow. It also was astonished (that) it was not in her. For still the forms possessed a power of fire and light. It (i.e. the power) remained in order that it might be in Nature until all the powers are taken away from her. For just as the light of the Spirit was completed in three clouds, it is necessary that also the power which is in Hades will be completed at the appointed time. For, because of the grace of the Majesty, I came forth to her from the water for the second time. For my face pleased her. Her face also was glad.

And I said to her, "May seed and power come forth from you upon the earth." And she obeyed the will of the Spirit that she might be brought to naught. And when her forms returned, they rubbed their tongue(s) with each other; they copulated; they begot winds and demons and the power which is from the fire and the Darkness and the Spirit. But the form which remained alone cast the beast from herself. She did not have intercourse, but she was the one who rubbed herself alone. And she brought forth a wind which possessed a power from the fire and the Darkness and the Spirit.

And in order that the demons also might become free from the power which they possessed through the impure intercourse, a womb was with the winds resembling water. And an unclean penis was with the demons in accordance with the example of the Darkness, and in the way he rubbed with the womb from the beginning. And after the forms of Nature had been together, they separated from each other. They cast off the power, being astonished about the deceit
which had happened to them. They grieved with an eternal grief. They covered themselves with their power.

And when I had put them to shame, I arose with my garment in the power and — which is above the beast which is a light, in order that I might make Nature desolate. The mind which had appeared in the Nature of Darkness, (and) which was the eye of the heart of Darkness, at my wish reigned over the winds and the demons. And I gave him a likeness of fire, light, and attentiveness, and a share of guileless word. Therefore he was given of the greatness in order to be strong in his power, independent of the power, independent of the light of the Spirit, and intercourse of Darkness, in order that, at the end of time, when Nature will be destroyed, he may rest in the honored place. For he will be found faithful, since he has loathed the unchastity of Nature with the Darkness. The strong power of the mind came into being from the mind and the unbegotten Spirit.

But the winds, which are demons from water and fire and darkness and light, had intercourse unto perdition. And through this intercourse the winds received foam from the penis of the demons. They conceived a power in their womb. From the breathing the wombs of the winds girded each other until the times of the birth came. They went down to the water. And the power was delivered, through the breathing which moves the birth, in the midst of the practice. And every form of the birth received shape in it. When the times of the birth were near, all the winds were gathered from the water which is near the earth. They gave birth to all kinds of unchastity. And the place where the wind alone went was permeated with the unchastity. Barren wives came from it and sterile husbands. For just as they are born, so they bear.

Because of you (pl.), the image of the Spirit appeared in the earth and the water. For you are like the Light. For you possess a share of the winds and the demons, and a thought from the Light of the power of the Astonishment. For everything which he brought forth from the womb upon the earth was not a good thing for her, but her groan and her pain, because of the image which appeared in you from the Spirit. For you are exalted in your heart. And it is blessedness, Shem, if a part is given to someone and if he departs from the soul to (go) to the thought of the Light. For the soul is a burden of the Darkness, and those who know where the root of the soul came from will be able to grope after Nature also. For the soul is a work of unchastity and an (object of) scorn to the thought of Light. For I
am the one who revealed concerning all that is unbegotten. 30

And in order that the sin of Nature might be filled, I made the womb, which was disturbed, pleasant — the blind wisdom — that I might be able to bring (it) to naught. And at my wish, he plotted with the water of Darkness and also the Darkness, that they might wound every form of your (pl.) heart. For by the will of the light of the Spirit they surrounded you; they bound you in Faith. And in order that his plan might become idle, he sent a demon that the plan of her wickedness might be proclaimed. And he caused a flood, and he destroyed your (pl.) race, in order to take the light and to take from Faith. But I proclaimed quickly by the mouth of the demon that a tower come to be up to the particle of the light, which was left in the demons and their race — which was water — that the demon might be protected from the turbulent chaos. And the womb planned these things according to my will in order that she might pour forth completely. A tower came to be through the demons. The Darkness was disturbed by his loss. He loosened the muscles of the womb. And the demon who was going to enter the tower was protected in order that the races might continue and might acquire coherence through him. For he possesses power from every form.

Return henceforth, O Shem, and rejoice [greatly] over your race and Faith, for without body and necessity it is protected from every body of Darkness, bearing witness to the holy things of the greatness which was revealed to them in their thought by my will. And they shall rest in the unbegotten Spirit without grief. But you, Shem, because of this, you remained in (the) body outside the cloud of light that you might remain with Faith. And Faith will come to you. Her thought will be taken and given to you with a consciousness of light. And I told you these things for the benefit of your race from the cloud of light. And likewise what I shall say to you concerning everything, I shall reveal to you completely that you may reveal them to those who will be upon the earth the second time.

O Shem, the disturbance which occurred at my wish happened in order that Nature might become empty. For the wrath of the Darkness subsided. O Shem, the Darkness' mouth was shut. No longer does the light which shone for the world appear in it, according to my will. And when Nature had said that its wish was fulfilled, then every form was engulfed by the waters in prideful ignorance. She (i.e. Nature) turned her dark vagina and cast from her the power of fire which was in her from the beginning through the practice of the
Darkness. It (masc.) lifted itself up and shone upon the whole world instead of the righteous one. And all her forms sent forth a power like a flame of fire up to heaven as a help to the corrupted light, which had lifted itself up. For they were members of the chaotic fire. And she did not know that she had harmed herself. When she cast forth the power, the power which she possessed, she cast it forth from the genitals. It was the demon, a deceiver, who stirred up the womb in every form.

And in her ignorance, as if she were doing a great thing, she granted the demons and the winds a star each. For without wind and star nothing happens upon the earth. For every power is filled by them after they were released from the Darkness and the fire and the power and the light. For in the place where their darkness and their fire were mixed with each other beasts were brought forth. And it was in the place of the Darkness, and the fire, and the power 28 of the mind, and the light, that human beings came into existence. Being from the Spirit, the thought of the Light, my eye, exists not in every man. For before the flood came from the winds and the demons, rain came to men. But then, in order that the power which is in the tower might be brought forth, and might rest upon the earth Nature, which had been disturbed, wanted to harm the seed which will be upon the earth after the flood. Demons were sent to them, and a deviation of the winds, and a burden of the angels, and a fear of the prophet, a condemnation of speech, that I may teach you, O Shem, from what blindness your race is protected. When I have revealed to you all that has been spoken, then the righteous one will shine upon the world with my garment. And the night and the day will be separated. For I shall hasten down to the world to take the light of that place, the one which Faith possesses. And I shall appear to those who will acquire the thought of the light of the Spirit. For because of them my majesty appeared.

When he will have appeared, O Shem, upon the earth, [in] the place which will be called Sodom, (then) safeguard the insight which I shall give you. For those whose heart was pure will congregate to you, because of the word which you will reveal. For when you appear in the world, dark Nature will shake against you, together with the winds and a demon, that they may destroy the insight. But you, proclaim quickly to the Sodomites your universal teaching, for they are your members. For the demon of human form will part from that place by my will, since he is ignorant. He
will guard this utterance. But the Sodomites, according to the will of the Majesty, will bear witness to the universal testimony. They will rest with a pure conscience in the place of their repose, which is the unbegotten Spirit. And as these things will happen, Sodom will be burned unjustly by a base nature. For the evil will not cease in order that your majesty may reveal that place.

Then the demon will depart with Faith. And then he will appear in the four regions of the world. And when Faith appears in the last likeness, then will her appearance become manifest. For the first-born is the demon who appeared in the union of Nature with many faces, in order that Faith might appear in him. For when he appears in the world, evil passions will arise, and earthquakes, and wars, and famines, and blasphemies. For because of him the whole world will be disturbed. For he will seek the power of Faith and Light; he will not find it. For at that time the demon will also appear upon the river to baptize with an imperfect baptism, and to trouble the world with a bondage of water. But it is necessary for me to appear in the members of the thought of Faith to reveal the great things of my power. I shall separate it from the demon who is Soldas. And the light which he possesses from the Spirit I shall mix with my invincible garment, as well as him whom I shall reveal in the darkness for your sake and for the sake of your race which will be protected from the evil Darkness.

Know, O Shem, that without Elorchaios and Amoias and Strophaias and Chelkeak and Chelkea and Aileou, no one will be able to pass by this wicked region. For this is my memorial that in it I have been victorious over the wicked region. And I have taken the light of the Spirit from the frightful water. For when the appointed days of the demon draw near he who will baptize erringly —, then I shall appear in the baptism of the demon to reveal with the mouth of Faith a testimony to those who belong to her. I testify of thee, Spark the unquenchable, Osei, the elect of the Light, the eye of heaven, and Faith, the first and the last, and Sophia, and Saphaia, and Saphaina, and the righteous Spark, and the impure light. And you (sg.), east, and west, and north, and south, upper air and lower air, and all the powers and authorities, you (pl.) are in Nature. And you (sg.), Moluchtha and Soch are from every work and every impure effort of Nature. Then I shall come from the demon down to the water. And whirlpools of water and flames of fire will rise up against me. Then I shall come up from the water, having put on the
light of Faith and the unquenchable fire, in order that through my help the power of the Spirit may cross, she who has been cast in the world by the winds and the demons and the stars. And in them every unchastity will be filled.

Finally, O Shem, consider yourself pleasing in the thought of the Light. Do not let your thought have dealings with the fire and the body of Darkness which was an unclean work. These things which I teach you are right.

This is the paraphrase: — For you did not remember that it is from the firmament that your race has been protected. — Elorchaios is the name of the great Light, the place from which I have come, the Word which has no equal. And the likeness is my honored garment. And Derderkeas is the name of his Word in the voice of the Light. And Strophaia is the blessed glance which is the Spirit. And it is Chelkeach, who is my garment, who has come from the Astonishment, who was in the cloud of the Hymen which appeared, as a trimorphic cloud. And Chelkea is my garment which has two forms, he who was in the cloud of Silence. And Chelke is my garment which was given him from every region; it was given him in a single form from the greatness, he who was in the cloud of the middle region. And the star of the Light which was mentioned is my invincible garment which I wore in Hades; this (i.e. the star of the Light) is the mercy which surpasses the thought and the testimony of those who bear witness. And the testimony which has been mentioned: the First and the Last, Faith, the Mind of the wind of darkness. And Sophaia and Saphaina are in the cloud of those who have been separated from the chaotic fire. And the righteous Spark is the cloud of light which has shone in your (pl.) midst. For in it (i.e. the cloud of light) my garment will go down to chaos.

But the impure light, which appeared in the Darkness (and) which belongs to dark Nature, is a power. And the upper air and the lower air, and the powers and the authorities, the demons and the stars, these possessed a particle of fire and a light from the Spirit. And Moluchthas is a wind, for without it nothing is brought forth upon the earth. He has a likeness of a serpent and a unicorn. His protrusion(s) are manifold wings. And the remainder is the womb which has been disturbed. You are blessed, Shem, for your race has been protected from the dark wind which is many-faced. And they will bear the universal testimony and (bear witness) to the impure practice of (Nature). And they will become sublime through the reminder of the Light.
O Shem, no one who wears the body will be able to complete these things. But through remembrance he will be able to grasp them, in order that, when his thought separates from the body, then these things may be revealed to him. They have been revealed to your race. O Shem, it is difficult for someone wearing a body to complete these things, as I said to you. And it is a small number that will complete them, those who possess the particle of the mind and the thought of the light of the Spirit. They will keep their mind from the impure practice. For many in the race of Nature will seek the security of the Power. They will not find it, nor will they be able to do the will of Faith. For they are seed of the universal Darkness. And those who find them are in much suffering. The winds and the demons will hate them. And the bondage of the body is severe. For where the winds, and the stars, and the demons cast forth from the power of the Spirit, (there) repentance and testimony will appear upon them, and mercy will lead them to the unbegotten Spirit. And those who are repentant will find rest in the consummation and Faith, in the place of the Hymen. This is the Faith which will fill the place which has been left empty. But those who do not share in the Spirit of light and in Faith will dissolve in the Darkness, the place where repentance did not come.

It is I who opened the eternal gates which were shut from the beginning. To those who long for the best of life, and those who are worthy of the repose, he revealed them. I granted perception to those who perceive. I disclose to them all the thoughts and the teaching of the righteous ones. And I did not become their enemy at all. But when I had endured the wrath of the world, I was victorious. There was not one of them who knew me. The gates of fire and endless smoke opened against me. All the winds rose up against me. The thunderings and the lightning-flashes for a time will rise up against me. And they will bring their wrath upon me. And on account of me according to the flesh, they will rule over them according to kind.

And many who wear erring flesh will go down to the harmful waters through the winds and the demons. And they are bound by the water. And he will heal with a futile remedy. He will lead astray, and he will bind the world. And those that do the will of Nature, their part will [...] two times in the day of the water and the forms of Nature. And it will not be granted them, when Faith disturbs them in order to take to herself the righteous one.

O Shem, it is necessary that the thought be called by the Word in
order that the bondage of the power of the Spirit may be saved from the frightful water. And it is blessedness if it is granted someone to contemplate the exalted one, and to know the exalted time and the bondage. For the water is an insignificant body. And men are not released, since they are bound in the water, just as from the beginning the light of the Spirit was bound.

O Shem, they are deceived by manifold demons, thinking that through baptism with the uncleanness of water, that which is dark, feeble, idle, (and) disturbing, he will take away the sins. And they do not know that from the water to the water there is bondage, and error and unchastity, envy, murder, adultery, false witness, heresies, robberies, lusts, babblings, wrath, bitterness, great [...]. Therefore there are many deaths which burden their thoughts. For I foretell it to those who have a heart. They will refrain from the impure baptism. And those who take heart from the light of the Spirit will not have dealings with the impure practice. And their heart will not expire, nor will they curse. And the water — (nor) will they be given honor. Where the curse is, there is the deficiency. And the blindness is where the honor is. For if they mix with the evil ones, they become empty in the dark water. For where the water has been mentioned, there is Nature, and the oath, and the lie, and the loss.

For this is my appearance: for when I have completed the times which are assigned to me upon the earth, then I will cast from me [my garment of fire (?)]. And my unequalled garment will come forth upon me, and also all my garments which I put on in all the clouds which were from the Astonishment of the Spirit. For the air will tear my garment. For it (i.e. my garment) will shine, and it will divide all the clouds up to the root of the Light. The repose is the mind and my garment. And my remaining garments, those on the left and those on the right, will shine on the back in order that the image of the Light may appear. For my garments which I put on in the three clouds, in the last day they will rest in their root, i.e. in the unbegotten Spirit, since they are without fault, through the division of (the) clouds.

Therefore I have appeared, being faultless, on account of the clouds, because they are unequal, in order that the wickedness of Nature might be ended. For she wished at that time to snare me. She was about to fix (to the cross) Soldas who is the dark flame, who
attended on the [....] of error, 40 that he might snare me. 1 She took care of her faith, 1 being vainglorious. 1

And at that time 5 the light was about to separate from the Darkness, and a voice 1 was heard in the world, saying, 1 "Blessed is the eye which has seen thee, and the mind which has supported thy majesty at my desire." It will be said by the exalted one, "Blessed is Rebouel among every race of men, for it is you (fem.) alone who have seen." And she will listen. And they will behead the woman who has the perception, 1 whom you will reveal upon the earth. And according to my will she will bear witness, and she will cease from every vain effort of Nature and chaos. For the woman whom they will behead at that time is the coherence of the power of the demon who will baptize the seed of darkness in severity, 1 that it (i.e. the seed) may mix with unchastity. 30 He begot a woman. She was called Rebouel.

See, 1 O Shem, how all the things I have said to you have been fulfilled. 1 [And . . . . And the things which] you lack, according to my will they will appear to you at that place upon the earth that you may reveal them as they are. Do not let your thought have dealings with the body. For I have said these things to you, through the voice of the fire, 1 for I entered through the midst of the clouds. And I spoke according to the language of each one. 1 This is my language which I spoke to you. 1 And it will be taken from you. And you will speak with the voice of the world upon the earth. And it will appear to you with that appearance and voice, and all that I have said to you. 1 Henceforth proceed with Faith to shine in the depths of the world. 1

And I, Shem, awoke as if from a long sleep. 1 I marveled when I received the power of the Light and his whole thought. 25 And I proceeded with Faith to shine with me. And the righteous one followed us with my invincible garment. And all that he had told me would happen upon the earth happened. Nature was handed over to Faith, that she (i.e. Faith) might overturn her and that she (i.e. Nature) might stand in the Darkness. 1 She brought forth a turning motion while wandering night and day without receiving rest with the souls. 1 These things completed her deeds.

Then I rejoiced in the thought of the Light. 1 I came forth from the Darkness and I walked in Faith where the forms of Nature are, up to the top of the earth, to the things which are prepared.

Thy Faith is upon the earth the whole day. For all night and day
she surrounds Nature to take to herself the righteous one. For Nature is burdened, and she is troubled. For none will be able to open the forms of the Womb except the mind alone who was entrusted with their likeness. For frightful is their likeness of the two forms of Nature, the one which is blind.

But they who have a free conscience remove themselves from the babbling of Nature. For they will bear witness to the universal testimony; they will strip off the burden of Darkness; they will put on the Word of the Light; and they will not be kept back in the insignificant place. And what they possess from the power of the mind they will give to Faith. They will be accepted without grief. And the chaotic fire which they possess they will place in the middle region of Nature. And they will be received by my garments, those which are in the clouds. It is they who guide their members. They will rest in the Spirit without suffering. And because of this the appointed term of Faith appeared upon the earth for a short time, until the Darkness is taken away from her, and her testimony is revealed which was revealed by me. They who will prove to be from her root will strip off the Darkness and the chaotic fire. They will put on the light of the mind and they will bear witness. For all that I have said must happen.

After I cease to be upon the earth and withdraw up to my rest, a great, evil error will come upon the world, and many evils in accordance with the number of the forms of Nature. Evil times will come. And when the era of Nature is approaching destruction, darkness will come upon the earth. The number will be small. And a demon will come up from the power who has a likeness of fire. He will divide the heaven, (and) he will rest in the depth of the east. For the whole world will quake. And the deceived world will be thrown into confusion. Many places will be flooded because of envy of the winds and the demons who have a name which is senseless: Phorbea, Chloerga. They are the ones who govern the world with their teaching. And they lead astray many hearts because of their disorder and their unchastity. Many places will be sprinkled with blood. And five races by themselves will eat their sons. But the regions of the south will receive the Word of the Light. But they who are from the error of the world and from the east - . A demon will come forth from (the) belly of the serpent. He was in hiding in a desolate place. He will perform many wonders. Many will loathe him. A wind will come forth from his mouth with a female likeness. Her name will be called
Abalphe. He will reign over the world from the east to the west.

Then Nature will have a final opportunity. And the stars will cease from the sky. The mouth of error will be opened in order that the evil Darkness may become idle and silent. And in the last day the forms of Nature will be destroyed with the winds and all their demons; they will become a dark lump, just as they were from the beginning. And the sweet waters which were burdened by the demons will perish. For where the power of the Spirit has gone there are my sweet waters. The other works of Nature will not be manifest. They will mix with the infinite waters of darkness. And all her forms will cease from the middle region.

I, Shem, have completed these things. And my mind began to separate from the body of darkness. My time was completed. And my mind put on the immortal memorial. And I said, "I agree with thy memorial which thou hast revealed to me: Elorchaioi, and thou, Amoiaiai, and thou, Sederkeas, and they guilelessness, Strophaias, and thou, Chelkeak, and thou, Chelkea, and Chelke and Elaie, you (pl.) are the immortal memorial. I testify to thee, Spark, the unquenchable one, who is an eye of heaven and a voice of light, and Sophaias, and Saphaias, and Saphaina, and the righteous Spark, and Faith, the first and the last, and the upper air and lower air, and thou, Chelkeak, and Chelke and Elaie, you (pl.) are the immortal memorial. I testify to thee, Spark, the unquenchable one, who is an eye of heaven and a voice of light, and Sophaias, and Saphaias, and Saphaina, and the righteous Spark, and Faith, the First and the Last, and the upper air and the lower air,) and all the powers and the authorities that are in the world. And you, impure light, and you (sg.) also, east, and west, and south, and north, you (pi.) are the zones of the inhabited world. And you (fem. sg.) also Moluchtha and Essoch, you (pl.) are the root of evil and every work and impure effort of Nature."

These are the things which I completed while bearing witness. I am Shem. On the day that I was to come forth from (the) body, when my thought remained in (the) body, I awoke as if from a long sleep. And when I arose as it were from the burden of my body, I said, Just as Nature became old, so is it also in the day of mankind. Blessed are they who knew, when they slept, in what power their thought rested.

And when the Pleiades separated, I saw clouds which I shall pass by. For the cloud of the Spirit is like a pure beryl. And the cloud
of the hymen is like a shining emerald. And the cloud of silence is like a flourishing amaranth. And the cloud of the middle region is like a pure jacinth. And when the righteous one appeared in Nature, then — when Nature was angry — she felt hurt, and she granted to Morphaia to visit heaven. The righteous one visits during twelve periods that he may visit them during one period, in order that his time may be completed quickly, and Nature may become idle.

Blessed are they who guard themselves against the heritage of death, which is the burdensome water of darkness. For it will not be possible to conquer them in a few moments, since they hasten to come forth from the error of the world. And if they are conquered, they will be kept back from them and be tormented in the darkness until the time of the consummation. When the consummation has come and Nature has been destroyed, then their thoughts will separate from the Darkness. Nature has burdened them for a short time. And they will be in the ineffable light of the unbegotten Spirit without a form. And thus is the mind as I have said from the first.

Henceforth, O Shem, go in grace and continue in faith upon the earth. For every power of light and fire will be completed by me because of you. For without you they will not be revealed until you speak them openly. When you cease to be upon the earth, they will be given to the worthy ones. And apart from this proclamation, let them speak about you upon the earth, since they will take the carefree and agreeable land.
THE SECOND TREATISE OF THE GREAT SETH
(VII,2)

Introduced by
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The Second Treatise of the Great Seth is a revelation dialogue allegedly delivered by Jesus Christ to an audience of "perfect and incorruptible ones," that is, gnostic believers. Apart from the title, the name Seth never occurs in the text, though perhaps Jesus Christ is meant to be identified with Seth. The treatise presents, in a brief and simple way, the true story of the Savior's commission by the heavenly Assembly, his descent to earth, his encounter with the worldly powers and apparent crucifixion, and his return to the Pleroma. To this story of the Savior are added an exhortation to the Savior's followers and a promise of future blessedness. As the Savior says to the gnostic believers at the close of his discourse, "Rest then with me, my fellow spirits and my brothers, for ever."

There is no doubt that The Second Treatise of the Great Seth is a work that is both Christian and gnostic. On the one hand, Christian elements are tightly woven into the fabric of the treatise. The tractate accepts the New Testament or parts of it, and claims to be the revelation of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the crucifixion figures prominently in the tractate; in fact, it is described in three separate scenes within the tractate. On the other hand, The Second Treatise of the Great Seth is also clearly gnostic: knowledge is the means of salvation. The God of this world is evil and ignorant, and can be identified with the God of the Old Testament; in addition, all his minions are mere counterfeiters and laughingstocks. The interpretation of the crucifixion is that of the Gnostic Basilides as presented by the heresiologist Irenaeus: Simon of Cyrene is crucified in the place of the laughing Jesus.

The purpose for which The Second Treatise of the Great Seth was written is plainly polemical. The entire first part (49,10-59,18) describes the true history of Jesus Christ and emphasizes, over against orthodox Christianity, his docetic passion. The second part of the tractate (59,19-70,10) is a refutation of orthodoxy's claim to be the true church. Despite the trials and persecutions apparently instigated by the orthodox church, by those ignorant and imitative persons "who think that they are advancing the name of Christ," the gnostic believers will enjoy true brotherhood on earth, and bliss in the joy and union of eternal life.
And the perfect Majesty is at rest in the ineffable light, in the truth of the mother of all these, and all of you that attain to me, to me alone who am perfect, because of the Word. For I exist with all the greatness of the Spirit, which is a friend to us and our kindred alike, since I brought forth a word to the glory of our Father, through his goodness, as well as an imperishable thought; that is, the Word within him — it is slavery that we shall die with Christ — and an imperishable and undefiled thought, an incomprehensible marvel, the writing of the ineffable water which is the word from us. It is I who am in you (pl.) and you are in me, just as the Father is in you in innocence.

Let us gather an assembly together. Let us visit that creation of his. Let us send someone forth in it, just as he visited the Ennoias, the regions below. And I said these things to the whole multitude of the multitudinous assembly of the rejoicing Majesty. The whole house of the Father of Truth rejoiced that I am the one who is from them. I produced thought about the Ennoias which came out of the undefiled Spirit, about the descent upon the water, that is, the regions below. And they all had a single mind, since it is out of one. They charged me since I was willing. I came forth to reveal the glory to my kindred and my fellow spirits.

For those who were in the world had been prepared by the will of our sister Sophia — she who is a whore because of the innocence which has not been uttered. And she did not ask anything from the All, nor from the greatness of the Assembly, nor from the Pleroma. Since she was first she came forth to prepare monads and places for the Son of Light, and the fellow workers which she took from the elements below to build bodily dwellings from them. But, having come into being in an empty glory, they ended in destruction in the dwellings in which they were, since they were prepared by Sophia. They stand ready to receive the life-giving word of the ineffable Monad and of the greatness of the assembly of all those who persevere and those who are in me.

I visited a bodily dwelling. I cast out the one who was in it first, and I went in. And the whole multitude of the archons became troubled. And all the matter of the archons as well as all the begotten
powers of the earth were shaken when it saw the likeness of the Image, since it was mixed. And I am the one who was in it, not resembling him who was in it first. For he was an earthly man, but I, I am from above the heavens. I did not refuse them even to become a Christ, but I did not reveal myself to them in the love which was coming forth from me. I revealed that I am a stranger to the regions below.

There was a great disturbance in the whole earthly area with confusion and flight, as well as (in) the plan of the archons. And some were persuaded, when they saw the wonders which were being accomplished by me. And all these, with the race, that came down, flee from him who had fled from the throne to the Sophia of hope, since she had earlier given the sign concerning us and all the ones with me — those of the race of Adonaios. Others also fled, as if from the Cosmocrator and those with them, since they have brought every (kind of) punishment upon me. And there was a flight of their mind about what they would counsel concerning me, thinking that she (Sophia) is the whole greatness, and speaking false witness, moreover, against the Man and the whole greatness of the assembly.

It was not possible for them to know who the Father of Truth, the Man of the Greatness, is. But they who received the name because of contact with ignorance — which (is) a burning and a vessel — having created it to destroy Adam whom they had made, in order to cover up those who are theirs in the same way. But they, the archons, those of the place of Yaldabaoth, reveal the realm of the angels, which humanity was seeking in order that they may not know the Man of Truth. For Adam, whom they had formed, appeared to them. And a fearful motion came about throughout their entire dwelling, lest the angels surrounding them rebel. For without those who were offering praise — I did not really die lest their archangel become empty.

And then a voice — of the Cosmocrator — came to the angels: "I am God and there is no other beside me." But I laughed joyfully when I examined his empty glory. But he went on to say, "Who is man?" And the entire host of his angels who had seen Adam and his dwelling were laughing at his smallness. And thus did their Ennoia come to be removed outside the Majesty of the heavens, i.e. the Man of Truth, whose name they saw since he is in a small dwelling place, since they are small (and) senseless in their empty Ennoia, namely their laughter. It was contagion for them.
The whole greatness of the Fatherhood of the Spirit was at rest in his places. And I am he who was with him, since I have an Ennoia of a single emanation from the eternal ones and the undefiled and immeasurable incomprehensibilities. I placed the small Ennoia in the world, having disturbed them and frightened the whole multitude of the angels and their ruler. And I was visiting them all with fire and flame because of my Ennoia. And everything pertaining to them was brought about because of me. And there came about a disturbance and a fight around the Seraphim and Cherubim, since their glory will fade, and the confusion around Adonaios on both sides and their dwelling — to the Cosmocrator and him who said, “Let us seize him”; others again, “The plan will certainly not materialize.”

For Adonaios knows me because of hope. And I was in the mouths of lions. And the plan which they devised about me to release their Error and their senselessness — I did not succumb to them as they had planned. But I was not afflicted at all. Those who were there punished me. And I did not die in reality but in appearance, lest I be put to shame by them because these are my kinsfolk. I removed the shame from me and I did not become fainthearted in the face of what happened to me at their hands. I was about to succumb to fear, and I (suffered) according to their sight and thought, in order that they may never find any word to speak about them. For my death which they think happened, (happened) to them in their error and blindness, since they nailed their man unto their death. For their Ennoias did not see me, for they were deaf and blind. But in doing these things, they condemn themselves. Yes, they saw me; they punished me. It was another, their father, who drank the gall and the vinegar; it was not I. They struck me with the reed; it was another, Simon, who bore the cross on his shoulder. I was another upon whom they placed the crown of thorns. But I was rejoicing in the height over all the wealth of the archons and the offspring of their error, of their empty glory. And I was laughing at their ignorance.

And I subjected all their powers. For as I came downward no one saw me. For I was altering my shapes, changing from form to form. And therefore, when I was at their gates I assumed their likeness. For I passed them by quietly, and I was viewing the places, and I was not afraid nor ashamed, for I was undefiled. And I was speaking with them, mingling with them through those who are mine, and trampling on those who are harsh to them with zeal, and quenching the flame. And I was doing all these things because of my
desire 5 to accomplish what I desired 1 by the will of the Father above. 1

And the Son 1 of the Majesty, who was hidden 1 in the regions below, 10 we brought to the height where I (was) 1 in all these aeons with them, 1 which (height) no one has seen 1 nor known, where 1 the wedding of the wedding robe is, 15 the new one and 1 not the old, nor does it perish. 1 For it is a new and perfect bridal chamber of the 1 heavens, as I 1 have revealed (that) there are 20 three ways: an 1 undefiled mystery in a 1 spirit of this aeon, which does not 1 perish, nor is it fragmentary, 1 nor able to be spoken 25 of; rather, it is 1 undivided, universal, 1 and permanent. For the soul, the one 1 from the height, will not speak 1 about the error which is here, nor 30 transfer from these aeons, 1 since it will be 1 transferred when it becomes free and when it 1 is endowed with nobility 1 in the world, standing 58 before the Father without weariness 1 and fear, always mixed 1 with the Nous of power (and) 1 of form. They will see me 5 from every side without hatred. 1 For since they see me, they are being seen (and) 1 are mixed with them. Since they 1 did not put me to shame, they were not 1 put to shame. Since they were not afraid 10 before me, they will pass by 1 every gate without fear and 1 will be perfected in the third 1 glory.

It was 1 my going to 15 the revealed height which the world did not accept, 1 my third baptism in a revealed image. 1 When they had fled from 1 the fire of the 1 seven Authorities, and 20 the sun of the powers of 1 the archons set, darkness took them. 1 And the world became poor 1 when he was restrained with a multitude 1 of fetters. They nailed him 25 to the tree, and they fixed him with 1 four nails of brass. The 1 veil of his temple 1 he tore with his hands. It was a 1 trembling which seized 30 the chaos of the earth, 1 for the souls which were 1 in the sleep below were released. 1 And they arose. They went about 1 boldly, having shed 59 zealous service of ignorance 1 and unlearnedness 1 beside the dead tombs, 1 having put on the new man, 5 since they have come to know 1 that perfect Blessed One of 1 the eternal and incomprehensible Father 1 and the infinite light, 1 which is I, since I came to 10 my own and united 1 them with myself. There is no need 1 for many words, 1 for our Ennoia was with their Ennoia. 1 Therefore they knew what 15 I speak of, for we took counsel 1 about the destruction of the 1 archons. And therefore I did 1 the will of the Father, who is I. 1

After we went forth from our home, 20 and came down to this world, 1 and came into being in the world 1 in bodies, we were hated 1 and persecuted, not only 1 by those who are ignorant, but 25 also by those who think that 1 they are advancing the name of Christ, 1 since they
were unknowingly empty, not knowing who they are, like dumb animals. They persecuted those who have been liberated by me, since they hate them — those who, should they shut their mouth, would weep with a profitless groaning because they did not fully know me. Instead, they served two masters, even a multitude. But you will become victorious in everything, in war and battles, jealous division and wrath. But in the uprightness of our love we are innocent, pure, (and) good, since we have a mind of the Father in an ineffable mystery.

For it was ludicrous. It is who bear witness that it was ludicrous, since the archons do not know that it is an ineffable union of undefiled truth, as exists among the sons of light, of which they made an imitation, having proclaimed a doctrine of a dead man and lies so as to resemble the freedom and purity of the perfect assembly, (and) themselves with their doctrine to fear and slavery, worldly cares, and abandoned worship, being small (and) ignorant since they do not contain the nobility of the truth for they hate the one in whom they are, and love the one in whom they are not. For they did not know the Knowledge of the Greatness, that it is from above and (from) a fountain of truth, and that it is not from slavery and jealousy, fear and love of worldly matter. For that which is not theirs and that which is theirs they use fearlessly and freely. They do not desire because they have authority, and (they have) a law from themselves over whatever they will wish.

But those who have not are poor, that is, those who do not possess him. And they desire him and lead astray those, who through them have become like those who possess the truth of their freedom, just as they bought us for servitude and constraint of care and fear. This person is in slavery. And he who is brought by constraint of force and threat has been guarded by God. But the entire nobility of the Fatherhood is not guarded, since he guards only him who is from him, without word and constraint, since he is united with his will, he who belongs only to the Ennoia of the Fatherhood, to make it perfect and ineffable through the living water, to be with you mutually in wisdom, not only in word of hearing but in deed and fulfilled word. For the perfect ones are worthy to be established in this way and to be united with me, in order that they may not share in any enmity, in a good friendship. I accomplish everything through the Good One, for this is the union of the truth, that they should have no adversary. But everyone who brings division — and
he will learn no wisdom at all because he brings division and is not a friend — is hostile to them all. But he who lives in harmony and friendship of brotherly love, naturally and not artificially, completely and not partially, this person is truly the desire of the Father. He is the universal one and perfect love.

For Adam was a laughingstock, since he was made a counterfeit type of man by the Hebdomad, as if he had become stronger than I and my brothers. We are innocent with respect to him, since we have not sinned. And Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were a laughingstock, since they, the counterfeit fathers, were given a name by the Hebdomad, as if he had become stronger than I and my brothers. We are innocent with respect to him, since we have not sinned. David was a laughingstock in that his son was named the Son of Man, having been influenced by the Hebdomad, as if he had become stronger than I and the follow members of my race. But we are innocent with respect to him; we have not sinned. Solomon was a laughingstock, since he thought that he was Christ, having become vain through the Hebdomad, as if he had become stronger than I and my brothers. But we are innocent with respect to him. I have not sinned. The 12 prophets were laughingstocks, since they have come forth as imitations of the true prophets. They came into being as counterfeits through the Hebdomad, as if he had become stronger than I and my brothers. But we are innocent with respect to him, since we have not sinned. Moses, a faithful servant, was a laughingstock, having been named “the Friend,” since they perversely bore witness concerning him who never knew me. Neither he nor those before him, from Adam to Moses and John the Baptist, none of them knew me nor my brothers.

For they had a doctrine of angels to observe dietary laws and bitter slavery, since they never knew truth, nor will they know it. For there is a great deception upon their soul making it impossible for them ever to find a Nous of freedom in order to know him, until they come to know the Son of Man. Now concerning my Father, I am he whom the world did not know, and because of this, it (the world) rose up against me and my brothers. But we are innocent with respect to him; we have not sinned.

For the Archon was a laughingstock because he said, “I am God, and there is none greater than I. I alone am the Father, the Lord, and there is no other beside me. I am a jealous God, who brings the sins of the fathers upon the children for three and four genera-
tions." As if he had become stronger than I and my brothers! But we are innocent with respect to him, in that we have not sinned, since we mastered his teaching. Thus he was in an empty glory. And he does not agree with our Father. And thus through our fellowship we grasped his teaching, since he was vain in an empty glory. And he does not agree with our Father, for he was a laughingstock and judgment and false prophecy.

O those who do not see, you do not see your blindness, i.e. this which was not known, nor has it ever been known, nor has it been known about him. They did not listen to firm obedience. Therefore they proceeded in a judgment of error, and they raised their defiled and murderous hands against him as if they were beating the air. And the senseless and blind ones are always senseless, always being slaves of law and earthly fear.

I am Christ, the Son of Man, the one from you (pl.) who is among you. I am despised for your sake, in order that you yourselves may forget the difference. And do not become female, lest you give birth to evil and (its) brothers: jealousy and division, anger and wrath, fear and a divided heart, and empty, non-existent desire. But I am an ineffable mystery to you.

Then before the foundation of the world, when the whole multitude of the Assembly came together upon the places of the Ogdoad, when they had taken counsel about a spiritual wedding which is in union, and thus he was perfected in the ineffable places by a living word, the undefiled wedding was consummated through the Mesotes of Jesus, who inhabits them all and possesses them, who abides in an undivided love of power. And surrounding him, he appears to him as a Monad of all these, a thought and a father, since he is one. And he stands by them all, since he as a whole came forth alone. And he is life, since he came from the Father of ineffable and perfect Truth, (the father) of those who are there, the union of peace and a friend of good things, and life eternal and undefiled joy, in a great harmony of life and faith, through eternal life of fatherhood and motherhood and sisterhood and rational wisdom.

They had agreed with Nous, who stretches out (and) will stretch out in joyful union and is trustworthy and faithfully listens to someone. And he is in fatherhood and motherhood and rational brotherhood and wisdom. And this is a wedding of truth, and a repose of incorruption, in a spirit of truth, in every mind, and a perfect light in an unnameable mystery. But this is not, nor will it happen among
us in any region or place in division and breach of peace, but (in) union and a mixture of love, all of which are perfected in the one who is.

It (fem.) also happened in the places under heaven for their reconciliation. Those who knew me in salvation and undividedness, and those who existed for the glory of the father and the truth, having been separated, blended into the one through the living word. And I am in the spirit and the truth of the motherhood, just as he has been there; I was among those who are united in the friendship of friends forever, who neither know hostility at all, nor evil, but who are united by my Knowledge in word and peace which exists in perfection with everyone and in them all. And those who assumed the form of my type will assume the form of my word. Indeed, these will come forth in light forever, and (in) friendship with each other in the spirit, since they have known in every respect (and) indivisibly that what is is One. And all of these are one. And thus they will learn about the One, as (did) the Assembly and those dwelling in it. For the father of all these exists, being immeasurable (and) immutable: Nous and Word and Division and Envy and Fire. And he is entirely one, being the All with them all in a single doctrine because all these are from a single spirit. O unseeing ones, why did you not know the mystery rightly?

But the archons around Yaldabaoth were disobedient because of the Ennoia who went down to him from her sister Sophia. They made for themselves a union with those who were with them in a mixture of a fiery cloud, which was their Envy, and the rest who were brought forth by their creatures, as if they had bruised the noble pleasure of the Assembly. And therefore they revealed a mixture of ignorance in a counterfeit of fire and earth and a murderer, since they are small and untaught, without knowledge having dared these things, and not having understood that light has fellowship with light, and darkness with darkness, and the corruptible with the perishable, and the imperishable with the incorruptible.

Now these things I have presented to you (pl.) — I am Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, who is exalted above the heavens, O perfect and incorruptible ones, because of the incorruptible and perfect mystery and the ineffable one. But they think that we decreed them before the foundation of the world in order that, when we emerge from the places of the world, we may present there the symbols of incorruption from the spiritual union unto knowledge. You (pl.) do not
know it because the fleshly cloud overshadows you. But I alone am the friend of Sophia. I have been in the bosom of the father from the beginning, in the place of the sons of the truth, and the Greatness. Rest then with me, my fellow spirits and my brothers, for ever.

Second Treatise of the Great Seth
The *Apocalypse of Peter* is a pseudonymous Christian Gnostic writing that contains an account of a revelation seen by the apostle Peter and interpreted by Jesus the Savior. The persecution of Jesus is used as a model for understanding early Christian history in which a faithful gnostic remnant is oppressed by those “who name themselves bishop and also deacons.”

This document belongs to the literary genre of the apocalypse. It is organized around three vision reports attributed to Peter. The visions are explained by the Savior, who functions as the interpreting angel commonly found in apocalyptic literature. In a series of prophecies that actually reflect past events, the early Christian church is portrayed as divided into various factions which oppose the gnostic community. The world is a hostile environment for the immortal souls (the Gnostics), who outwardly resemble the mortal souls (non-Gnostics) but inwardly differ from them by virtue of their immortal essence. Having been given knowledge of their heavenly origin, the Gnostics long for the return of the heavenly Son of Man, who will come as the eschatological judge to condemn the oppressors and vindicate the Gnostics.

The apocalyptic form of this tractate has been employed to present a gnostic understanding of Christian tradition about Jesus. The traditional material is skillfully interpreted in accordance with gnostic theology. The first visionary scene, depicting the hostile priests and people about to kill Jesus (72,4-9) is interpreted in terms of at least six groups characterized as “blind ones who have no guide.” Many of these groups appear to be from the orthodox church, but some of them may be better understood as rival gnostic sects. The second scene (81,3-14) describes Peter’s vision of the crucifixion of Jesus. The accompanying interpretation by Jesus makes a distinction between the external physical form and the living Jesus; the latter stands nearby laughing at his ignorant persecutors. The third visionary scene (82,4-16) corresponds to the resurrection of Jesus in orthodox tradition, but it is interpreted in gnostic terms as a reunification of the spiritual body of Jesus with the intellectual light of the heavenly pleroma.

The *Apocalypse of Peter* is significant in several respects. It contains important source material for a gnostic Christology that understands Jesus as a docetic redeemer. The view of the Gnostic community, including its relationship to Peter as its originator, is another key theme of this document. Of considerable interest are the identity of the gnostic group to which the writing is addressed, and the stage of the controversy, between emerging orthodoxy and heresy, presupposed...
by the tractate. It would appear that the *Apocalypse of Peter* was written in the third century, when this distinction between orthodoxy and heresy was rather clearly drawn.

**APOCALYPSE OF PETER**

**VII 70, 13-84, 14**

Apocalypse of Peter

As the Savior was sitting in the temple in the three hundredth (year) of the covenant and the agreement of the tenth pillar, and being satisfied with the number of the living, incorruptible Majesty, he said to me, "Peter, blessed are those above belonging to the Father who revealed life to those who are from the life, through me, since I reminded (them), they who are built on what is strong, that they may hear my word and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of law from righteousness, as being from the height of every word of this pleroma of truth, having been enlightened in good pleasure by him whom the principalities sought. But they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of the prophets. He has now appeared among these, in him who appeared, who is the Son of Man who is exalted above the heavens in a fear of men of like essence. But you yourself, Peter, become perfect in accordance with your name with myself, the one who chose you, because from you I have established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge. Therefore be strong until the imitation of righteousness — of him who had summoned you, having summoned you to know him in a way which is worth doing because of the rejection which happened to him, and the sinews of his hands and his feet, and the crowning by those of the middle region, and the body of his radiance which they bring in hope of service because of a reward of honor — as he was about to reprove you three times in this night."

And as he was saying these things, I saw the priests and the people running up to us with stones, as if they would kill us; and I was afraid that we were going to die.

And he said to me, "Peter, I have told you many times that they are blind ones who have no guide. If you want to know their blindness, put your hands upon (your) eyes — your robe — and say what you see."
But when I had done it, I did not see anything. I said, “No one sees (this way).”

Again he told me, “Do it again.”

And there came in me fear with joy, for I saw a new light greater than the light of day. Then it came down upon the Savior. And I told him about those things which I saw.

And he said to me again, “Lift up your hands and listen to what the priests and the people are saying.”

And I listened to the priests as they sat with the scribes. The multitudes were shouting with their voice.

When he heard these things from me he said to me, “Prick up your ears and listen to the things they are saying.”

And I listened again. “As you sit they are praising you.”

And when I said these things, the Savior said, “I have told you that these (people) are blind and deaf. Now then, listen to the things which they are telling you in a mystery, and guard them. Do not tell them to the sons of this age. For they shall blaspheme you in these ages since they are ignorant of you, but they will praise you in knowledge.

“For many will accept our teaching in the beginning. And they will turn from them again by the will of the Father of their error, because they have done what he wanted. And he will reveal them in his judgment, i.e. the servants of the Word. But those who became mingled with these shall become their prisoners, since they are without perception. And the guileless, good, pure one they push to the worker of death, and to the kingdom of those who praise Christ in a restoration. And they praise the men of the propagation of falsehood, those who will come after you. And they will cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure. But they will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error, and into the hand of an evil, cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled heretically.

“For some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. And they will say evil things against each other. Some will be named: (those) who stand in (the) strength of the archons, of a man and a naked woman who is manifold and subject to much suffering. And those who say these things will ask about dreams. And if they say that a dream came from a demon worthy of their error, then they shall be given perdition instead of incorruption.

“For evil cannot produce good fruit (cf. Lk 6:43). For the place
from which each of them is 1 produces that which is like itself; 1 for not every soul is 1 of the truth, nor 1 of immortality. 15 For every soul of these ages 1 has death assigned to it 1 in our view, because 1 it is always a slave, 1 since it is created for its desires 20 and their eternal 1 destruction, in which 1 they are and 1 from which they are. 1 They (the souls) love the creatures 25 of the matter which came forth 1 with them.

"But 1 the immortal souls are not like these, 1 O Peter. But indeed, as long as 1 the hour is not yet come, (the immortal soul) 30 shall 1 resemble a mortal one. 1 But it shall not reveal 1 its nature, that it 1 alone is the 76 immortal one, and thinks about 1 immortality, having faith, 1 and desiring to renounce 1 these things.

"For people do not gather 5 figs from thorns or from 1 thorn trees, if they 1 are wise, nor grapes 1 from thistles (cf. Lk 6:44). 1 For on the one hand, that which is 10 always becoming is in that 1 from which it is, being 1 from what is not good, which 1 becomes destruction for it (the soul) and 1 death. But that (immortal soul) which comes to be 15 in the Eternal One is in the One of 1 the life and the immortality of 1 the life which they resemble. 1

"Therefore all that which exists 1 not will dissolve into what 20 exists not. 1 For deaf and 1 blind ones join only with 1 their own kind. 1

"But others shall change 25 from evil words 1 and misleading 1 mysteries. Some 1 who do not understand mystery 1 speak of things which 30 they do not understand, 1 but they will boast 1 that the mystery 1 of the truth is theirs 1 alone. And 55 in haughtiness 77 they shall grasp at pride 1 to envy the 1 immortal soul which has become a pledge. 1 For every authority, rule, 5 and power of the aeons 1 wishes to be with 1 these in the creation of 1 the world, in order that those who 1 are not, having been forgotten 10 by those that are, 1 may praise them, 1 though they have not been saved, nor have they 1 been brought to the Way by them, 1 always wishing 15 that they may become 1 imperishable ones. 1 For if the immortal soul 1 receives power in an 1 intellectual spirit 1. But immediately 20 they join with one 1 of those who misled them. 1

"But many others, 1 who oppose the 1 truth and are the messengers 25 of error, will 1 set up their error and 1 their law against 1 these pure thoughts of mine, 1 as looking out 20 from one (perspective), thinking 1 that good and evil 1 are from one (source). 1 They do business in 78 my word. And they will propagate 1 harsh fate. 1 The race of immortal 1 souls will go in it 5 in vain 1 until my Parousia. 1 For they shall come out of them 1 and my forgiveness of 1 their transgressions 10 into which they fell through 1 their adversaries, 1 whose ransom I got 1 from the
slavery in which they were, to give them freedom that they may create an imitation remnant in the name of a dead man, who is Hermas, of the first-born of unrighteousness, in order that the light which exists may not be believed by the little ones. But those of this sort are the workers who will be cast into the outer darkness, away from the sons of light. For neither will they enter, nor do they permit those who are going up to their approval for their release.

"And still others of them who suffer think that they will perfect the wisdom of the brotherhood which really exists, which is the spiritual fellowship with those united in communion, through which the wedding of incorruptibility shall be revealed. The kindred race of the sisterhood will appear as an imitation. These are the ones who oppress their brothers, saying to them, 'Through this our God has pity, since salvation comes to us through this,' not knowing the punishment of those who are made glad by those who have done this thing to the little ones whom they saw, (and) whom they took prisoner.

"And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals."

But I said, "I am afraid because of what you have told me, that indeed little (ones) are, in our view, the counterfeit ones, indeed, that there are multitudes that will mislead other multitudes of living ones, and destroy them among themselves. And when they speak your name they will be believed."

The Savior said, "For a time determined for them in proportion to their error they will rule over the little ones. And after the completion of the error, the never-aging one of the immortal understanding shall become young, and they (the little ones) shall rule over those who are their rulers. The root of their error he shall pluck out, and he shall put it to shame so that it shall be manifest in all the impudence which it has assumed to itself. And such ones shall become unchangeable, O Peter.

"Come, therefore, let us go on with the completion of the will of the incorruptible Father. For behold, those who will bring them judgment are coming, and they will put them to shame. But me they cannot touch. And you, O Peter, shall stand in their midst. Do not be afraid because of your cowardice. Their minds shall be closed, for the invisible one has opposed them."
When he had said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said, "What do I see, O Lord, that it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one, glad and laughing on the tree? And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?"

The Savior said to me, "He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me."

But I, when I had looked, said, 'Lord, no one is looking at you. Let us flee this place.'

But he said to me, "I have told you, 'Leave the blind alone!' And you, see how they do not know what they are saying. For the son of their glory instead of my servant they have put to shame."

And I saw someone about to approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing on the tree. And he was filled with a Holy Spirit, and he is the Savior. And there was a great, ineffable light around them, and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them. And when I looked at him, the one who gives praise was revealed.

And he said to me, "Be strong, for you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given, to know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is the first-born, and the home of demons, and the stony vessel (?) in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit.

"These things, then, which you saw you shall present to those of another race who are not of this age. For there will be no honor in any man who is not immortal, but only (in) those who were chosen from an immortal substance, which has shown that it is able to contain him who gives his abundance. Therefore I said, 'Every one
who has, it will be given to him, and "he will have plenty" (Mt 25:29).

30 But he who does not have, that is, the man of this place, who is completely dead, who is removed from the planting of the creation of what is begotten, whom, if one of the immortal essence appears, they think that they possess him — it will be taken from him and be added to the one who is. You, therefore, be courageous and do not fear at all. For I shall be with you in order that none of your enemies may prevail over you. Peace be to you. Be strong!”

When he (Jesus) had said these things, he (Peter) came to himself.

Apocalypse of Peter
THE TEACHINGS OF SILVANUS (VII, 4)

Introduced and translated by

Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee

The eclectic spirit of the second and early third centuries is clearly reflected in the fourth tractate of Codex VII, The Teachings of Silvanus. Its author, like other educated Christians, found it necessary both to reject erroneous pagan thought and yet, simultaneously, to appropriate the best of such thought to clarify and make cogent the Faith. The resultant text, a rare specimen of Hellenistic Christian wisdom literature, displays a remarkable synthesis of biblical and late Jewish ideas with Middle Platonic and late Stoic anthropological, ethical, and theological concepts. The synthesis has a didactic purpose: to impart the wisdom of Christ which confers the self-controlled and "quiet" life, enables one to be "pleasing to" the Divine, and, ultimately, helps one "become like God."

Unlike the other four tractates in Codex VII, Teach. Silv. is not gnostic and may even contain some anti-gnostic polemic. It is explicitly affirmed, for example, that all creation has been brought into being by God through his "hand," the Christ. Thus, unlike the gnostic dualists, one should never describe the Creator (demiurge!) as "ignorant," in spite of the author's pessimism regarding interpersonal relations (97, 30-98, 10). Moreover, instead of a docetic view of Christ, the author states that the Savior "bore affliction" for our sins, "died" as a "ransom" and gave his life for others, and put on "humanity." With respect to anthropology, while the author does espouse a tripartite view of man ("mind," "soul," and "body") similar to the gnostic, he departs sharply from their views that one is "saved by nature." Every human being, the text maintains, possesses both divine "reason" and "mind" and thus has the capacity for salvation; God wishes for all to be saved.

Perhaps what helped attract the Teach. Silv. to the predominantly gnostic collection of writings that constitute the Nag Hammadi library, however, was its rather austere and somewhat ascetic ethic. The text counsels keeping under control base passions, passions and unclean thoughts which are induced by the adversary, Satan. One is to have God alone as a friend, for all the world is deceitful and full of pain. Moreover, "austerity" is a type of life to be preferred, and "fornication" is to be avoided rigorously, as is "lust." Especially must one struggle with Satan, the adversary, who offers temptations in subtle disguises, and whose evil powers seek to infest one's life. Such an ascetic and almost "anchoritic" ethic could have appealed to Gnostics, as could also other concepts in the text, such as the "bridal chamber" in 94, 27-29.

The literary genre of Teach. Silv. is clearly indebted to Jewish and Hellenistic Jewish wisdom literature; though the author is also influenced by the Cynic-Stoic diatribe and the Hellenistic hymn styles. Influence from the Jewish side, though, is exhibited in the direct quotes in Teach. Silv. of canonical and apocryphal (e.g., 112, 37-113, 7 = Wis 7:25-26) wisdom writings.
With respect to content, the first part of Teach. Silv. is more Hellenistic and philosophical in character. The latter part is more specifically Christian and biblical in imagery.

In the initial part (84,15-99,4) the writer’s main concern is with the state of the soul. To prevent its being inhabited and overcome by base passions and irrational impulses (symbolically described as “robbers” and “wild, savage beasts,” the reader is admonished to let the “mind” (nous) become his “guiding principle” and “reason” (logos) become his “teacher.” The terminology and emphases clearly echo the anthropology and ethics of the late Stoa and of Middle Platonism.

In the second part of the tractate (99,6-118,7), on the other hand, emphasis is placed on the salvation of the soul made possible by the Redeemer-Revealer Christ, Son of Almighty God. At the outset, the author echoes the Platonic discussion of the “One and the many,” utilizing this concept to discuss how Christ and God, like the “mind” in man’s body, is present all places without being confined to a single place. Such “topological theology” both presupposes a non-dualistic cosmology in rather anti-gnostic fashion and offers an implicit refutation of the pantheistic theology of Stoicism. In conclusion, the reader is exhorted to seek Christ’s inward help in illuminating “reason,” in escaping the control of evil powers, in purifying one’s life, and in seeking the lasting rewards of his wisdom and God’s way (117,5-118,7).

As to the authorship of Teach. Silv., we know of several early prominent Christians who bore the name “Silvanus.” The late dates of their activity, however, and the differences of their teaching from that of our tractate seem to rule out consideration of any of them as its author. Rather, we are probably to recognize in the name “Silvanus” that common device used in Christian apocryphal literature of attributing a later, anonymous writing to a figure known by name in the New Testament canon. Such a “Silas” or “Silvanus” was a prominent member of the Jerusalem Church, cotraveller with Paul (Ac 15:22-40; 16:19-29; etc.), and possibly the amanuensis of “Peter’s” named in 1 Peter 5:12. So, here is yet another Nag Hammadi tractate identified with the circle of influence emanating from Paul and Peter (cf. Pr. Paul, Apoc. Paul, Acts Pet. 12 Apost., Apoc. Pet. and Ep. Pet. Phil.). As to who the author of Teach. Silv. actually was, however, we must state (as did Origen of the author of Hebrews) “in truth (only) God knows!”

In dating the text, we are mainly dependent on internal evidence, though dates have been found in the cartonnage used to strengthen the leather envelope that contained Codex VII. These dates point toward the third quarter of the fourth century as the probable time of the manuscript’s burial near ancient Chenosokia. Internal evidence includes the author’s apparent knowledge of all major divisions of Old and New Testament canons; the stage of development of the Church’s doctrine of Christ’s “Descent into Hell” that was familiar to the author; the affinities of the text’s “Logos” and “Wisdom” Christology to that of the Alexandrine Fathers, Clement of Alexandria and Origen; and the close parallels of the thought of the later Stoa (notably, Marcus Aurelius) and Middle Platonists (especially Albinus) with that of the author of Teach. Silv. Cumulatively, such evidence points toward the late second to early third century.

Many striking parallels that can be adduced to our text from Philo, Sent. Sex-
the Teachings of Silvanus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and even Athanasius underscore its affinities with what has become known as Alexandrian theology. Its theology, Christology, cosmology, anthropology, and ethics all point, in their similarity, toward Alexandrian Egypt as the probable provenance.

The concluding note (118,8-9) is secondary, probably added by the copyist. It is surrounded by magical signs related to Christ's designation as "ichthys" ("fish"), an acrostic signifying "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." It may well have been added by the copyist in response to the impressive Christology he has just copied in the text. For him Christ is truly the "extraordinary wonder"!

THE TEACHINGS OF SILVANUS

VII 84, 115-118, 7
118, 8-9

The Teachings of Silvanus

Abolish every childish time of life, acquire for yourself strength of mind and soul, and intensify the struggle against every folly of the passions of love and base wickedness, and love of praise, and fondness of contention, and tiresome jealousy and wrath, and anger and the desire of avarice. Guard your (pl.) camp and weapons and spears. Arm yourself and all the soldiers which are the words, and the commanders which are the counsels, and your mind as a guiding principle.

My son, throw every robber out of your gates. Guard all your gates with torches which are the words, and you will acquire through all these things a quiet life. But he who will not guard these things will become like a city which is desolate since it has been captured. All kinds of wild beasts have trampled upon it, for thoughts which are not good are evil wild beasts. And your city will be filled with robbers, and you will not be able to acquire peace, but only all kinds of savage wild beasts. The Wicked One, who is a tyrant, is lord over these. While directing this, he (the Wicked One) is beneath the great mire. The whole city which is your soul will perish.

Remove yourself from these things, O wretched soul. Bring in your guide and your teacher. The mind is the guide, but reason is the teacher. They will bring you out of destruction and dangers.

Listen, my son, to my advice! Do not show your back to your enemies and flee, but rather pursue them as a [strong one]. Be not an animal, with men pursuing you; but rather, be a man, with you
pursuing the evil wild beasts, lest somehow they become victorious over you and trample upon you as on a dead man, and you perish due to their wickedness.

O wretched man, what will you do if you fall into their hands? Protect yourself lest you be delivered into the hands of your enemies. Entrust yourself to this pair of friends, reason and mind, and no one will be victorious over you. May God dwell in your camp, may his Spirit protect your gates, and may the mind of divinity protect the walls. Let holy reason become a torch in your mind, burning the wood which is the whole of sin.

And if you do these things, O my son, you will be victorious over all your enemies, and they will not be able to wage war against you, neither will they be able to resist, nor will they be able to get in your way. For if you find these, you will despise them as deniers of truth. They will speak with you, cajoling you and enticing you, not because they are afraid of you, but because they are afraid of those who dwell within you, namely, the guardians of the divinity and the teaching.

My son, accept the education and the teaching. Do not flee from the education and the teaching, but when you are taught, accept (it) with joy. And if you are educated in any matter, do what is good. You will plait a crown of education by your guiding principle. Put on the holy teaching like a robe. Make yourself noble-minded through good conduct. Obtain the austerity of good discipline. Judge yourself like a wise judge. Do not go astray from my teaching, and do not acquire ignorance, lest you lead your people astray. Do not flee from the divine and the teaching which are within you, for he who is teaching you loves you very much. For he shall bequeath to you a worthy austerity. Cast out the animal nature which is within you, and do not allow base thought to enter you. For ... you know the way which I teach.

If it is good to rule over the [few], as you see it, much better is it that you rule over everyone, since you are exalted above every congregation and every people, (are) prominent in every respect, and (are) a divine reason, having become master over every power which kills the soul.

My son, does anyone want to be a slave? Why, then, do you trouble yourself wrongly?

My son, do not fear anyone except God alone, the Exalted One. Cast the deceitfulness of the Devil from you. Accept the light for
your eyes, and cast the darkness from you. Live in Christ, and you will acquire a treasure in heaven. Do not become a sausage (made) of many things which are useless, and do not become a guide in your blind ignorance.

My son, listen to my teaching which is good and useful, and end the sleep which weighs heavily upon you. Depart from the forgetfulness which fills you with darkness, since if you were unable to do anything, I would not have said these things to you. But Christ has come in order to give you this gift. Why do you pursue the darkness when the light is at your disposal? Why do you drink stale water though sweet is available for you? Wisdom summons you, yet you desire folly. Not by your own desire do you do these things, but it is the animal nature within you that does them.

Wisdom summons you in her goodness, saying, "Come to me, all of you, O foolish ones, that you may receive a gift, the understanding which is good and excellent. I am giving to you a high-priestly garment which is woven from every (kind of) wisdom." What else is evil death except ignorance? What else is evil darkness except familiarity with forgetfulness! Cast your anxiety upon God alone. Do not become desirous of gold and silver which are profitless, but clothe yourself with wisdom like a robe, put knowledge on yourself like a crown, and be seated upon a throne of perception. For these are yours, and you will receive them again on high another time.

For a foolish man usually puts on folly like a robe, and like a garment of sorrow he puts on shame. And he crowns himself with ignorance and takes his seat upon a throne of [nescience]. For while he is [without reason], he leads only himself astray, for he is guided by ignorance. And he goes the ways of the desire of every passion. He swims in the desires of life and has sunk. To be sure, he thinks that he finds profit when he does all the things which are without profit. The wretched man who goes through all these things will die because he does not have the mind, the helmsman. But he is like a ship which the wind tosses to and fro, and like a loose horse which has no rider. For this (man) needed the rider which is reason. For the wretched one went astray because he did not want advice. He was thrown to and fro by these three misfortunes; he acquired death as a father, ignorance as a mother, and evil counsels as friends and brothers. Therefore, foolish one, you should mourn for yourself.

From now on, then, my son, return to your divine nature. Cast
from [you] these evil, deceiving friends! [Accept] Christ, [this true friend], as a good teacher. Cast from you death, which has become a father to you. For death did not exist, nor will it exist at the end.

But since you cast from yourself God, the holy Father, the true Life, the Spring of Life, therefore you have obtained death as a father and have acquired ignorance as a mother. They have robbed you of the true knowledge.

But return, my son, to your first Father, God, and Wisdom your mother, from whom you came into being from the very first in order that you might fight against all of your enemies, the Powers of the Adversary.

Listen, my son, to my advice. Do not be arrogant in opposition to every good opinion, but take for yourself the side of the divinity of reason. Keep the holy commandments of Jesus Christ, and you will reign over every place on earth and will be honored by the angels and the archangels. Then you will acquire them as friends and fellow servants, and you will acquire places in heaven above.

Do not bring grief or trouble to the divine [which is] within you. But when you will care for it, will request of it that you remain pure, and will become self-controlled in your soul and body, you will become a throne of wisdom and one belonging to God's household. He will give you a great light through it (wisdom).

But before everything (else), know your birth. Know yourself, that is, from what substance you are, or from what race, or from what species. Understand that you have come into being from three races: from the earth, from the formed, and from the created. The body has come into being from the earth with an earthly substance, but the formed, for the sake of the soul, has come into being from the thought of the Divine. The created, however, is the mind, which has come into being in conformity with the image of God. The divine mind has substance from the Divine, but the soul is that which he (God) has formed for their own hearts. For I think that it (the soul) exists as wife of that which has come into being in conformity with the image, but matter is the substance of the body which has come into being from the earth.

[If] you mix yourself, you will acquire the three parts as you fall from virtue into inferiority. Live according to the mind. Do not think about things belonging to the flesh. Acquire strength, for the mind is strong. If you fall from this other, you have become male-
female. And if you cast out of yourself the substance of the mind, which is thought, you have cut off the male part and turned yourself to the female part alone. You have become psychic since you have received the substance of the formed. If you cast out the smallest part of this so that you do not acquire again a human part — but you have accepted for yourself the animal thought and likeness — you have become fleshly since you have taken on animal nature. For (if) it is difficult to find a psychical man, how much more so to find the Lord!

But I say that God is the spiritual one. Man has taken shape from the substance of God. The divine soul shares partly in this One (God); furthermore, it shares partly in the flesh. The base soul is wont to turn from side to side which it imagines the truth.

It is [good] for you, O man, to turn yourself toward the human rather than toward the animal nature — I mean toward the fleshly (nature). You will take on the likeness of the part toward which you will turn yourself.

I shall say something further to you. Again, for what will you (masc. sg.) be zealous? Did you (fem. sg.) wish to become animal when you had come into this kind of nature? But rather, share in a true nature of life. To be sure, animality will guide you into the race of the earth, but the rational nature will guide you in rational ways. Turn toward the rational nature and cast from yourself the earth-begotten nature.

O soul, persistent one, be sober and shake off your drunkenness, which is the work of ignorance. If you persist and live in the body, you dwell in rusticity. When you entered into a bodily birth, you were begotten. Come into being inside the bridal chamber! Be illuminated in mind!

My son, do not swim in any water, and do not allow yourself to be defiled by strange kinds of knowledge. Certainly you know [that] the schemes of the Adversary are not few and (that) the tricks which he has are varied? Especially has the noetic man been robbed of the intelligence of the snake. For it is fitting for you to be in agreement with the intelligence of (these) two: with the intelligence of the snake and with the innocence of the dove — lest he (the Adversary) come into you in the guise of a flatterer, as a true friend, saying, "I advise good things for you."

But you did not recognize the deceitfulness of this one when you received him as a true friend. For he casts into your heart evil
thoughts as good ones, and hypocrisy in the guise of true wisdom, avidity in the guise of conservative frugality, love of glory in the guise of that which is beautiful, boastfulness and pride in the guise of great austerity, and godlessness as [great] godliness. For he who says, "I have many gods," is godless. And he casts spurious knowledge into your heart in the guise of mysterious words. Who will be able to comprehend his thoughts and devices which are varied since he is a Great Mind for those who wish to accept him as king?

My son, how will you be able to comprehend the schemes of this one or his soul-killing counsel? For his devices and the schemes of his wickedness are many. And think about his entrances, that is, how he will enter your soul and in what garment he will enter you.

Accept Christ, who is able to set you free, and who has taken on the devices of that one so that through these he might destroy him by deceit. For this is the king whom you have who is forever invincible, against whom no one will be able to fight nor say a word. This is your king and your father, for there is no one like him. The divine teacher is with you always. He is a helper, and he meets you because of the good which is in you.

Do not put maliciousness in your judgment, for every malicious man harms his heart. For only a foolish man is wont to his destruction, but a wise man knows his way.

And a foolish man does not guard against speaking (a) mystery. A wise man, (however), does not blurt out every word, but he will be discriminating toward those who hear. Do not mention everything in the presence of those whom you do not know.

Have a great number of friends, but not counselors. First, examine your counselor, for do not honor anyone who flatters. Their word, to be sure, is sweet as honey, but their heart is full of hellebore. For whenever they think that they have become a reliable friend, then they will deceitfully turn against you, and they will cast you down into the mire.

Do not trust anyone as a friend, for this whole world has come into being deceitfully, and every [man] is troubled in vain. All things of the world are not profitable, but they happen in vain. There is no one, not even a brother, (who is trustworthy), since each one is seeking his own advantage.

My son, do not have anyone as a friend. But if you do acquire one, do not entrust yourself to him. Entrust yourself to God alone as father and as friend. For everyone proceeds deceitfully, while the
whole earth is full of suffering and pain — things in which there is no profit. If you wish to pass your life in quiet, do not keep company with anyone. And if you do keep company with them, be as if you do not. Be pleasing to God, and you will not need anyone.

Live with Christ, and he will save you. For he is the true light and the sun of life. For just as the sun which is visible and makes light for the eyes of the flesh, so Christ illuminates every mind and the heart. For (if) a wicked man (who is) in the body (has) an evil death, how much more so (does) he who has his mind blind. For every blind man [goes along in such a way] that he (?) is seen [just] as one who does not have his mind sane. He does not delight in acquiring the light of Christ, which is reason.

For everything which is visible is a copy of that which is hidden. For as a fire which burns in a place without being confined to it, so it is with the sun which is in the sky, all of whose rays extend to places on the earth. Similarly, Christ has a single being, and he gives light to every place. This is also the way in which he speaks of our mind, as if it were a lamp which burns and lights up the place. (Being) in a part of the soul, it gives light to all the parts.

Furthermore, I shall speak of what is more exalted than this: the mind, with respect to actual being, is in a place, which means it is in the body; but with respect to thought, the mind is not in a place. For how can it be in a place when it contemplates every place? But we are able to mention what is more exalted than this: for do not think in your heart that God exists in a place. If you localize the Lord of all in a place, then it is fitting for you to say that the place is more exalted than he who dwells in it. For that which contains is more exalted than that which is contained. For there is no place which is called incorporeal. For it is not right for us to say that God is corporeal. For the consequence (would be) that we (must) attribute both increase and decrease to the corporeal, but also that he (God) who is subject to these will not remain imperishable.

Now, it is not difficult to know the Creator of all creatures, but it is impossible to comprehend the likeness of this One. For it is difficult not only for men to comprehend God, but it is (also) difficult for every divine being, (both) the angels and the archangels. It is necessary to know God as he is. You cannot know God through anyone except Christ who has the image of the Father, for this image reveals the true likeness in correspondence to that which is revealed. A king is not usually known apart from an image.
Consider these things about God: he is in every place; on the other hand, he is in no place. With respect to power, to be sure, he is in every place; but with respect to divinity, he is in no place. So, then, it is possible to know God a little. With respect to his power, he fills every place, but in the exaltation of his divinity nothing contains him. Everything is in God, but God is not in anything.

Now what is it to know God? God is all which is in the truth. But it is as impossible to look at Christ as at the sun. God sees everyone; no one looks at him. But Christ without being jealous receives and gives. He is the Light of the Father, as he gives light without being jealous. In this manner he gives light to every place.

And all is Christ, he who has inherited all from the Existent One. For Christ is the idea of incorruptibility, and he is the Light which is shining undefiled. For the sun (shines) on every impure place, and yet it is not defiled. So it is with Christ: even if he is in the deficiency, yet he is without deficiency. And even if he has been begotten, he is (still) unbegotten. So it is with Christ: if, on the one hand, he is comprehensible, on the other he is incomprehensible with respect to his actual being. Christ is all. He who does not possess all is unable to know Christ.

My son, do not dare to say a word about this One, and do not confine the God of all to mental images. For he who condemns may not be condemned by the one who condemns. Indeed, it is good to ask and to know who God is. Reason and mind are male names. Indeed, let him who wishes to know about this One quietly and reverently ask. For there is no small danger in speaking about these things, since you know that you will be judged on the basis of everything that you say.

And understand by this that he who is in darkness will not be able to see anything unless he receives the light and recovers (his) sight by means of it. Examine yourself (to see) whether you wholly have the light, so that if you ask about these things, you may understand how you will escape. For many are seeking in darkness, and they grope about, wishing to understand since there is no light for them.

My son, do not allow your mind to stare downward, but rather let it look by means of the light at things above. For the light will always come from above. Even if it (the mind) is upon the earth, let it seek to pursue the things above. Enlighten your mind with the light of heaven so that you may turn to the light of heaven.

Do not tire of knocking on the door of reason, and do not cease...
walking in the way of Christ. Walk in it so that you may receive rest from your labors. If you walk in another way, there will be no profit in it. For also those who walk in the broad way will go down at their end to the perdition of the mire. For the Underworld is open wide for the soul, and the place of perdition is broad. Accept Christ, the narrow way. For he is oppressed and bears affliction for your sin.

O soul, persistent one, in what ignorance you exist! For who is your guide into the darkness? How many likenesses did Christ take on because of you? Although he was God, he among men as a man. He descended to the Underworld. He released the children of death. They were in travail, as the scripture of God has said. And he sealed up the (very) heart of it (the Underworld). And he broke its (the Underworld’s) strong bows completely. And when all the powers had seen him, they fled so that he might bring you, wretched one, up from the Abyss, and might die for you as a ransom for your sin. He saved you from the strong hand of the Underworld.

But you yourself, difficult (though it be), give to him your fundamental assent with (even so much as) a hint that he may take you up with joy! Now the fundamental choice, which is humility of heart, is the gift of Christ. A contrite heart is the acceptable sacrifice. If you humble yourself, you will be greatly exalted; and if you exalt yourself, you will be exceedingly humbled.

My son, guard yourself against wickedness, and do not let the Spirit of Wickedness cast you down into the Abyss. For he is mad and bitter. He is terrifying, and he casts everyone down into a pit of mire.

It is a great and good thing not to love fornication and not even to think of the wretched matter at all, for to think of it is death. It is not good for any man to fall into death. For a soul which has been found in death will be without reason. For it is better not to live than to acquire an animal’s life. Protect yourself lest you are burned by the fires of fornication. For many who are submerged in fire are its servants whom you do not know as your enemies.

O my son, strip off the old garment of fornication, and put on the garment which is clean and shining, that you may be beautiful in it. But when you have this garment, protect it well. Release yourself from every bond so that you may acquire freedom. If you cast out of yourself the desire whose devices are many, you will release yourself from the sins of lust.
Listen, O soul, to my advice. Do not become a den of foxes and snakes, nor a hole of serpents and asps, nor a dwelling place of lions, or a place of refuge of basilisk-snakes. When these things happen to you, O soul, what will you do? For these are the powers of the Adversary. Everything which is dead will come into you through them (the powers). For their food is everything which is dead and every unclean thing. For when these are within you, what living thing will come into you? The living angels will detest you. You were a temple, (but) you have made yourself a tomb. Cease being a tomb, and become (again) a temple, so that uprightness and divinity may remain in you.

Light the light within you. Do not extinguish it. Certainly no one lights a lamp for wild beasts or their young. Raise your dead who have died, for they lived and have died for you. Give them life. They shall live again.

For the Tree of Life is Christ. He is Wisdom. For he is Wisdom; he is also the Word. He is the Life, the Power, and the Door. He is the Light, the Angel, and the Good Shepherd. Entrust yourself to this one who became all for your sake.

Knock on yourself as upon a door, and walk upon yourself as on a straight road. For if you walk on the road, it is impossible for you to go astray. And if you knock with this one (Wisdom), you knock on hidden treasures. For since he (Christ) is Wisdom, he makes the foolish man wise. It (Wisdom) is a holy kingdom and a shining robe. For it (Wisdom) is much gold which gives you great honor. The Wisdom of God became a type of fool for you so that it might take you up, O foolish one, and make you a wise man. And the Life died for you when he (Christ) was powerless, so that through his death he might give life to you who have died.

Entrust yourself to reason and remove yourself from animalism. For the animal which has no reason is made manifest. For many think that they have reason, but if you look at them attentively, their speech is animalistic.

Give yourself gladness from the true vine of Christ. Satisfy yourself with the true wine in which there is no drunkenness nor error. For it (the true wine) marks the end of drinking since there is usually in it what gives joy to the soul and the mind through the Spirit of God. But first, nurture your reasoning powers before you drink of it (the true wine).
Do not pierce yourself with the sword of sin. Do not burn yourself, O wretched one, with the fire of lust. Do not surrender yourself to barbarians like a prisoner, nor to savage beasts which want to trample upon you. For they are as lions which roar very loudly. Be not dead lest they trample upon you. You shall be man! It is possible for you through reasoning to conquer them.

But the man who does nothing is unworthy of (being called) rational man. The rational man is he who fears God. He who fears God does nothing insolent. And he who guards himself against doing anything insolent is one who keeps his guiding principle. Although he is a man who exists on earth, he makes himself like God.

But he who makes himself like God is one who does nothing unworthy of God, according to the statement of Paul who has become like Christ.

For who shows reverence for God while not wanting to do things which are pleasing to him? For piety is that which is from the heart, and piety from the heart (characterizes) every soul which is near to God.

The soul which is a member of God’s household is one which is kept pure, and the soul which has put on Christ is one which is pure. It is impossible for it to sin. Now where Christ is, there sin is idle.

Let Christ alone enter your world, and let him bring to naught all powers which have come upon you. Let him enter the temple which is within you so that he may cast out all the merchants. Let him dwell in the temple which is within you, and may you become for him a priest and a Levite, entering in purity.

Blessed are you, O soul, if you find this one in your temple. Blessed are you still more if you perform his service.

But he who will defile the temple of God, that one God will destroy. For you lay yourself open, O man, if you cast this one out of your temple. For whenever the enemies do not see Christ in you, then they will come into you armed in order to crush you.

O my son, I have given you orders concerning these things many times so that you would always guard your soul. It is not you who will cast him (Christ) out, but he will cast you out. For if you flee from him, you will fall into great sin. Again, if you flee from him, you will become food for your enemies. For all base persons flee from their lord, and the (man) base in virtue and wisdom flees from Christ. For every man who is separated (from him) falls into the claws of the wild beasts.
Know who Christ is, for this is the friend who is faithful. He is also God and Teacher. This one, being God, became man for your sake. It is this one who broke the iron bars of the Underworld and the bronze bolts. It is this one who attacked and cast down every haughty tyrant. It is he who loosened from himself the chains of which he had taken hold. He brought up the poor from the Abyss and the mourners from the Underworld. It is he who humbled the haughty powers; he who put to shame haughtiness through humility; he who has cast down the strong and the boaster through weakness; he who has put on humanity.

And yet, the divine Word is God, he who bears patiently with man always. He wished to produce humility in the exalted. He (Christ) who has exalted man became like God, not in order that he might bring God down to man, but that man might become like God.

O this great goodness of God! O Christ, King who has revealed to men the Great Divinity, King of every virtue and King of life, King of ages and Great One of the heavens, hear my words and forgive me!

Furthermore, he manifested a great zeal for Divinity.

Where is a man (who is) wise or powerful in intelligence, or a man whose devices are many because he knows wisdom? Let him speak wisdom; let him utter great boasting! For every man has become a fool and has spoken out of his (own) knowledge. For he (Christ) confounded the counsels of guileful people, and he prevailed over those wise in their own understanding.

Who will be able to discover the counsel of the Almighty, or to speak of the Divinity, or to proclaim it correctly? If we have not even been able to understand the counsels of our companions, who will be able to comprehend the Divinity or the divinities of the heavens? If we scarcely find things on earth, who will search for the things of heaven? A Great Power and Great Glory has made the world known.

And the Life of Heaven wishes to renew all, that he may cast out that which is weak and every black form, that everyone may shine forth in heavenly garments in order to make manifest the command of the Father (who) is exceedingly brilliant, and that he (Christ) may crown those wishing to contend well. Christ, being judge of the con-
test, 20 is he who crowned every one, 1 teaching every one 1 to contend. This one who contended 1 first received the crown, gained dominion, 1 and appeared, giving light 25 to everyone. And all were 1 made new through the Holy Spirit 1 and the Mind.

O Lord Almighty, 1 how much glory shall I give Thee? 1 No one has been able 30 to glorify God adequately. 1 It is Thou who hast given glory 1 to Thy Word in order to save 1 everyone, O Merciful God. (It is) he who 1 has come from Thy mouth and has risen from 35 Thy heart, the First-born, the Wisdom, 1 the Prototype, the First 1 Light.

For he is light from 113 the power of God, and 1 he is an emanation of the pure glory 1 of the Almighty. 1 He is the spotless mirror of the working 5 of God, and he is the image of his 1 goodness. For he is also the Light 1 of the Eternal Light. He is the eye 1 which looks at the invisible 1 Father, always serving 10 and forming 1 by the Father's will. He 1 alone was begotten by the Father's good pleasure. 1 For he is an incomprehensible Word, 1 and he is Wisdom 15 and Life. He gives life to and 1 nourishes all living things and powers. 1 Just as the 1 soul gives life to all the members, 1 he rules all with 20 power and gives life to them. 1 For he is the beginning and 1 the end of everyone, watching over 1 all and encompassing them. 1 He is troubled on behalf of everyone, and he rejoices 25 and also mourns. On the one hand, he mourns 1 for those who have gotten as their lot the place 1 of punishment; on the other, he is troubled 1 about every one whom he arduously brings 1 to instruction. 30 But he rejoices over everyone who 1 is in purity.

Then beware, 1 lest somehow you fall into the hands of the 1 robbers. Do not allow sleep 1 to your eyes nor 35 drowsiness to your eyelids that 1 you may be saved like a gazelle 1 from nets and like a 114 bird from a trap.

Fight the 1 great fight as long as the fight lasts, 1 while all the powers are 1 staring after you — not only the holy ones, 5 but also all the powers 1 of the Adversary. Woe 1 to you if you are vanquished in the midst 1 of every one who is watching you! 1 If you fight the fight and 10 are victorious over the powers which fight against you, 1 you will bring great joy to every 1 holy one, and yet 1 great grief to your enemies. Your 1 judge helps (you) completely 15 since he wants you to be victorious.

Listen, my 1 son, and do not be slow 1 with your ears. Raise yourself up when you have left your old man behind 1 like an eagle. Fear 20 God in all your acts, 1 and glorify him through 1 good work. You know that
every man who is not pleasing to God is the son of perdition. He will go down to the Abyss of the Underworld.

O this patience of God, which bears with every one, which desires that every one who has become subject to sin be saved!

But no one prevents him (God) from doing what he wants. For who is stronger than him that he may prevent him? To be sure, it is he who touches the earth, causing it to tremble and also causing the mountains to smoke. (It is) he who has gathered together such a great sea as in a leather bag and has weighed all the water on his scales. Only the hand of the Lord has created all these things. For this hand of the Father is Christ, and it forms all. Through it, all has come into being since it became the mother of all. For he is always Son of the Father.

Consider these things about God Almighty who always exists: this One was not always King for fear that he might be without a divine Son. For all dwell in God, (that is), the things which have come into being through the Word, who is the Son as the image of the Father.

For God is nearby; he is not far off. All divine limits are those which belong to God's household. Therefore, if the divine agrees with you partially in anything, know that all of the Divine agrees with you. But this divine is not pleased with anything evil. For it is this which teaches all men what is good. This is what God has given to the human race so that for this reason every man might be chosen before all the angels and the archangels.

For God does not need to put any man to the test. He knows all things before they happen, and he knows the hidden things of the heart. They are all revealed and found wanting in his presence. Let no one ever say that God is ignorant. For it is not right to place the Creator of every creature in ignorance. For even things which are in darkness are before him like (things in) the light.

So, there is no other one hidden except God alone. But he is revealed to everyone, and yet he is very hidden. He is revealed because God knows all. And if they do not wish to affirm it, they will be corrected by their heart. Now he is hidden because no one perceives the things of God. For it is incomprehensible and unfathomable to know the counsel of God. Furthermore, it is difficult to comprehend him, and it is difficult to find Christ. For he is the one who dwells in every place, and also he is in no place. For no one who wants to will be able to know God as he actually is, nor Christ, nor
the Spirit, nor the chorus of angels, nor even the archangels, as well as the thrones of the spirits, and the exalted lordships, and the Great Mind. If you do not know [yourself], you will not be able to know all of these.

Open the door for yourself that you may know the One who is. Knock on yourself that the Word may open for you. For he is the Ruler of Faith and the Sharp Sword, having become all for everyone because he wishes to have mercy on everyone.

My son, prepare yourself to escape from the world-rulers of darkness and of this kind of air which is full of powers. But if you have Christ, you will conquer this entire world. That which you will open for yourself, you will open. That which you will knock upon for yourself, you will knock upon, benefiting yourself.

Help yourself, my son, (by) not proceeding with things in which there is no profit.

My son, first purify yourself toward the outward life in order that you may be able to purify the inward.

And be not as the merchants of the Word of God.

Put all words to the test first before you utter them.

Do not wish to acquire honors which are insecure, nor the boastfulness which brings you to ruin.

Accept the wisdom of Christ (who is) patient and mild, and guard this, O my son, knowing that God’s way is always profitable.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior (Ichthus), Wonder Extraordinary
THE THREE STELES OF SETH (VII,5)

Introduced by
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The Three Steles of Seth offers a rare view into the worship practice of a Gnostic Sethian community. These Gnostics identified their teachings with the primal revelation of God to Adam, which had passed through Seth to his descendants (The Apocalypse of Adam, V,5). Lost and forgotten for ages, this Sethian gnost had been revealed anew in the latter days. The recipients of this renewed revelation understood themselves as "the living and unshakable race" (118,12-13), the true latter-day descendants of Seth (hence the modern label of Sethian Gnosticism). The Three Steles of Seth is presented as part of this latter-day revelation, in this case to Dositheos, the supposed Samaritan founder of Gnosticism.

The text, which shows no Christian influence, is indebted to Jewish and Neoplatonic traditions. In Genesis, Seth marks a new beginning after the tragic conflict between Cain and Abel (Gn 3:25-5:8). Appointed by God to replace Abel, he is a son in the likeness of his father Adam, as Adam is in the likeness of God. It is in his time that "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." According to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus (Ant. I,67-71), Seth's descendants continued to follow his godfearing ways for seven generations, after which they too fell into a life of depravity. During this time, they preserved and added to the knowledge transmitted by Adam to Seth. Forwarned of impending divine judgements by water and fire, they preserved this knowledge for future generations on two steles, one of stone to survive the flood and one of brick to survive the fire.

This legend accounts for the presentation of the present text as the content of steles attributed to Seth (cf. Zost. 130,1-4 and Gos. Eg. 68,10-23). The expansion from the original two steles in the Jewish legend to three represents the influence of Neoplatonic conceptions of the divine triad. The three steles or hymnic prayers of the present text are addressed in ascending order to the threefold nature of god: the Selfbegotten Son, the male virgin Barbelo (mother), and the Unbegotten Father.

Ecstatic trips through the heavens are well attested in Sethian Gnosticism. The Sethian tractates Zostrianos and Allogenes record such journeys by the seers for which the texts were named. These accounts, however, record what was revealed to the seer in his ascent. The invocations of the seer to the divine triad are only noted in passing, as when Zostrianos affirms, "I joined with them all and blessed the Kalyptos aeon and the virgin Barbelo and the Invisible Spirit. I became all-perfect." In The Three Steles of Seth these blessings or hymnic prayers are recorded in full.
Since *Allogenes* may be interpreted as another name for Seth, both tractates may commemorate the ascent of the community’s primal ancestor to the divine triad. However, while *Allogenes* records for edification what was revealed to the seer, *The Three Steles of Seth* preserves the invocations of the seer as a prototype to serve the latter-day Sethian community in its liturgical reenactment of his ascent. While the hymnic prayers are set forth in the tractate as prayers of Seth, first person plural references in the text (e.g. 124,17-18) betray the use of the prayers in the worship practice of the community. The text has led Hans Martin Schenke to posit the existence of a Sethian mystery of ascension. The three subdivisions of the text thus correspond to the three stages or levels in the worshippers’ ascent to the threefold nature of god, since at the conclusion of the tractate one must return from the third back down to the second and first.

Neoplatonic philosophical terminology abounds in the text, especially the Existence-Life-Mind triad in the deity. The terminology is also found in the related tractates of *Zostrianos*, *Allogenes*, and *Marsanes*, which together form a cluster of Sethian Gnostic texts with close ties to Neoplatonism. *Zostrianos* and *Allogenes* are both mentioned by Porphyry in his *Life of Plotinus* as texts refuted by Plotinus, who taught a course “Against the Gnostics” in 265-266 C.E. Thus a dating for this stage of Sethian Gnosticism and therefore for *The Three Steles of Seth* is suggested. Provenience is uncertain, though the philosophical nature of the text would be much at home in Alexandria, Egypt.

The scribal note at the end of the text (127,28-32) has been variously interpreted as applying to *The Three Steles of Seth* alone or to the codex as a whole.

**THE THREE STELES OF SETH**

**VII 118, 10-127, 27**

127, 28-32

The revelation of Dositheos about the three steles of Seth, the Father of the living and unshakable race, which he (Dositheos) saw and understood. And after he had read them, he remembered them. And he gave them to the elect, just as they were inscribed there.

Many times I joined in giving glory with the powers, and I became worthy of the immeasurable majesties.

Now they (the steles) are as follows:

The First

Stele of Seth.

I bless thee, Father Geradama(s), I, as thine (own) Son, Emma-cha Seth, whom thou didst beget without begetting, as a blessing of our God; for I am thine (own) Son. And thou art my mind, O my
Father. And I, I sowed and begot; [but] thou hast [seen] the majesty. Thou hast stood imperishable. I bless thee, Father. Bless me, Father. It is because of thee that I exist; it is because of God that thou dost exist. Because of thee I am with that very one. Thou art light, since thou beholdest light. Thou hast revealed light. Thou art Mirotheas; thou art my Mirotheos. I bless thee as God; I bless thy divinity. Great is the good Self-begotten who stood, the God who had already stood. Thou didst come in goodness; thou hast appeared, and thou hast revealed goodness. I shall utter thy name, for thou art a first name. Thou art unbegotten. Thou hast appeared in order that thou mightest reveal the eternal ones. Thou art he who is. Therefore thou hast revealed those who really are. Thou art he who is uttered by a voice, but by mind thou glorified, thou who hast dominion everywhere. Therefore [the] perceptible world too knows thee because of thee and they seed. Thou art merciful.

And thou art from another race, and its place is over another race. And now thou art from another race, and its [place is] over another race. Thou art from another race, for thou art not similar. And thou art merciful, for thou art eternal. And thy place is over a race, for thou hast caused all these to increase; and for the sake of my seed. For it is thou who knows it, that its place is in begetting. But they are from other races, for they are not similar. But their place is over other races, for their place is in life. Thou art Mirotheos.

I bless his power which was given to me, who caused the malenesses that really are to become male three times; he who was divided into the pentad, the one who was given to us in triple power, the one who was begotten without begetting, the one who came from that which is elect; because of what is humble, he went forth from the midst.

Thou art a Father through a Father, a word from a command. We bless thee, Thrice Male, for thou didst unite the all through them all, for thou hast empowered us. Thou hast arisen from one; from one thou hast gone forth; thou hast come to one. [Thou] hast saved, thou hast saved, thou hast saved us, O crown-bearer, crown-giver! We bless thee eternally. We bless thee, once we have been saved, as the perfect individuals, perfect on account of thee, those who [became] perfect with thee who is complete, who completes, the one perfect through all these, who is similar everywhere.

Thrice Male, thou hast stood. Thou hast already stood. Thou wast divided everywhere. Thou didst continue being one. And those
whom thou hast willed, thou hast saved. 1 But thou dost will to be saved 1 all who are worthy.

Thou art 15 perfect! Thou art perfect! 1 Thou art perfect!

The First 1
Stele of Seth 1

The Second Stele 1
of Seth 20

Great is the first aeon, 1 male virginal Barbelo, 1 the first glory 1 of the invisible Father, she 1 who is called 25 "perfect."

Thou (fem.) hast seen first 1 the one who truly pre-exists 1 because he is a non-being. And 1 from him and through 1 him thou hast pre-existed 30 eternally, the non-being 1 from one indivisible, 1 triple [power], thou a triple 1 power, [thou a] great monad 1 from [a] pure monad, 122 thou an elect monad, the 1 first [shadow] of the holy 1 Father, light from 1 light.

[We] bless thee, 5 producer (fem.) of perfection, aeon-giver (fem.). 1 Thou hast [seen] the eternal 1 ones because they are from a shadow. 1 And thou hast become numerable. And 1 thou didst find, thou didst continue being 10 one (fem.); yet becoming numerable in division, thou 1 art three-fold. Thou art truly 1 thrice, thou one (fem.) 1 of the one (masc.). And thou art from 1 a shadow of him, thou a Hidden One, 15 thou a world of understanding, 1 knowing those of the one, that they 1 are from a shadow. And these 1 are thine in the heart.

For 1 their sake thou hast empowered the eternal ones 20 in being; thou hast empowered 1 divinity in living; 1 thou hast empowered knowledge in 1 goodness; in 1 blessedness thou hast empowered the 25 shadows which pour from the one. 1 Thou hast empowered this (one) in knowledge; 1 thou hast empowered another one in creation. 1 Thou hast empowered him who is equal 1 and him who is not equal, him 30 who is similar and him who is not similar. 1 Thou hast empowered him in begetting, and 1 (provided) forms in [that which] exists 1 to others. [. . . . 1 Thou hast] empowered 123 these. – He is that One Hidden 1 [in] the heart. – And [thou hast] come forth to 1 these and [from] these. Thou art divided 1 [among them]. And thou dost 5 become a great male [noetic] First-Apprearer.

- Fatherly God, 1 divine child, 1 begetter of multiplicity according to a division 1 of all who really are, 10 thou (masc.) hast appeared to them all
in a word. And thou (masc.) dost possess them all without begetting and eternally indestructible on account of thee (fem.). 15

Salvation has come to us; from thee is salvation. Thou art wisdom, thou knowledge; thou art truthfulness. On account of thee is life; from thee is life. 20 On account of thee is mind; from thee is mind. Thou art mind, thou a world of truthfulness, thou a triple power, thou threefold. Truly thou art thrice, the aeon of aeons. It is thou only who sees purely the first eternal ones and the unbegotten ones. 1

But the first divisions are as thou wast divided. Unite us as thou hast been united. Teach us [those] things which thou dost see. Empower [us] that we may be saved to eternal life. For [we] are [each] a shadow of thee as thou art a shadow [of that] first pre-existent one. Hear us first. We are eternal ones. Hear us as the perfect individuals. Thou art the aeon of aeons, the all-perfect one who is established.

Thou hast heard! Thou hast heard!
Thou hast saved! Thou hast saved!
We give thanks! We bless thee always! We shall glorify thee!

The Second Stele of Seth

The Third Stele

We rejoice! We rejoice! We rejoice!

We have seen! We have seen! We have seen the really pre-existent one (masc.), that he really exists, that he is the first eternal one.

O Unconceived, from thee are the eternal ones and the aeons, the all-perfect ones who are established, and the perfect individuals.

We bless thee, non-being, existence which is before existences, first being which is before beings, Father of divinity and life, creator of mind, giver of good, giver of blessedness!

We all bless thee, knower, in a [glorifying] blessing, (thou) because of whom [all these are, really, ...], who knows thee [through] thee alone. For there is no one [who is] active before thee. Thou art an only and living [spirit]. And [thou] knowest one, for this one who belongs to thee is on every side. We are not able to express him. For thy light shines upon us.

Present a command to us to see thee, so that we may be saved. Knowledge of thee, it is the salvation of us all. Present a command!
When thou dost command, we have been saved! Truly we have been saved! We have seen thee by mind! Thou art them all, for thou dost save them all, he who was not saved, nor was he saved through them. For thou, thou hast commanded us.

Thou art one. Thou art one, just as there is one (who) will say to thee: Thou art one, thou art a single living spirit. How shall we give thee a name? We do not have it. For thou art the existence of them all. Thou art the life of them all. Thou art the mind of them all. [For] thou [art he in whom they all] rejoice. 126

Thou hast commanded all these [to be saved] through thy word glory who is before him, Hidden One, blessed Senaon, [he who begat] himself, [Asi]neu(s). [..]ephneu(s), Optaon, Elemaon the great power, Emouniar, 10 Nibareu(s), Kandephor(os), Aphredon, Deiphaneus, thou who art Armedon to me, power-begetter, Thalana-theu(s), Antitheus, thou who existest within thyself, thou who art before thyself — and after thee no one entered into activity.

As what shall we bless thee? We are not empowered. But we give thanks, as being humble toward thee. For thou hast commanded us, as he who is elect, to glorify thee to the extent that we are able. We bless thee because we were saved. Always we glorify thee. For this reason we shall glorify thee, that we may be saved to eternal salvation. We have blessed thee, for we are empowered. We have been saved, for thou hast willed always that we all do this.

We all did this. [..] not through [.. 1273 aeon. ..], the one who was [..], we and those who [..]. He who will remember these and give glory always will become perfect among those who are perfect and impassable beyond all things. For they all bless these individually and together. And afterwards they shall be silent. And just as they were ordained, they ascend. After the silence, they descend from the third. They bless the second; after these the first. The way of ascent is the way of descent.

Know therefore, as those who live, that you have attained. And you taught yourselves the infinite things. Marvel at the truth which is within them, and (at) the revelation.

The Three Steles of Seth.

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This book belongs to the fatherhood. It is the son who wrote it. Bless me, O father. I bless you, O father, in peace.

Amen.
The tractate Zostrianos, a heavenly journey apocalypse, is the major work in Codex VIII and one of the longest works in the Nag Hammadi library. Unfortunately Codex VIII suffered extensive damage prior to its discovery and conservation in modern times so that almost every page of Zostrianos is incomplete and some pages now exist only as fragments. Consequently, much of the text of the tractate is now lost. In spite of these problems Zostrianos offers an interesting example of how some Gnostics combined a mythological world view and a philosophical interpretation of it, based on Platonic thought.

The book opens with an account of the call of its central character, Zostrianos, to leave this world and to journey through the heavens in pursuit of saving gnos­sis. In antiquity this Zostrianos was linked to the lineage of the famous Persian magus Zoroaster. His call is recounted in autobiographical fashion. He was deeply depressed, ready to commit suicide in the desert, when suddenly an angel appeared to him and called him to gnos­sis. Leaving his physical body behind on earth, he ascended with the angel through the lower reaches of the heavenly realms. At each level he was initiated through a baptism into the gnos­sis revealed there.

As Zostrianos’ journey continued he met a succession of angelic guides, questioned them and learned from each of them the gnos­sis of the various heavenly aeons through which he passed. The knowledge consisted largely in learning the names of the inhabitants of the heavenly world and sorting out the relationships between them. When his tour of the heavens was complete, Zostrianos descended once again to the physical world, where he wrote down the gnos­sis for the benefit of the elect, the holy seed of Seth. The tractate concludes with a brief but com­pelling homily in which Zostrianos exhorts his readers to abandon this oppressive world and to seek salvation through gnos­sis.

Zostrianos’ mythological gnos­sis posits a high god named the thrice powerful Invisible Spirit from whom everything else has emanated. The physical earth and its inhabitants represent the lowest and most ignorant level. Between it and the Spirit lies a vast aeon system called Barbelo and understood as the “thought” of the Spirit. Barbelo herself is divided into three constituent aeons: the upper­most aeon is named Kalyptos (the hidden or veiled aeon), in the middle is located the Protophanes (the first-visible or first-appearing aeon), and at the bottom is the Autogenes (the self-generated or self-begotten aeon). Each of these aeons has its own system of constituent beings called lights, glories, angels, waters, etc.

The philosophical interests of the tractate are clear from its use of questions, categories, and terms best known to us from the Neoplatonic school of Plotinus. Zostrianos never tires of asking his angelic revealers about how this changeable world came into existence from an unchanging source, or about why there are
different kinds of souls or animals or human beings. Their answers assert that each successive layer of the universe is formed on the basis of the models in the layer above and that each layer is less perfect than its model. Of special interest is the identification of the three Barbelo aeons with the philosophical triad of existence, mind, and life. These and other references make it almost certain that this tractate is the one mentioned by Porphyry (Vit. Plot., 16) as one of the spurious apocalypses in circulation in Plotinus' day and assigned by him to his pupil Amelius for refutation.

Zostrianos shares both its philosophical concern and some of its mythological world with three other tractates from the Nag Hammadi library: The Three Steles of Seth (VII,5), Marsenes (X,1) and Allogenes (XI,3). There are also some mythological ties, especially with regard to the names of the Autogenes system, with some of the more Christian works such as The Gospel of the Egyptians (Ill,2 and IV,2) and The Apocryphon of John (II,1 et al.), and with The Untitled Text of the Bruce Codex.

Except for a few allusions to the New Testament and Christianity in the extant text, the author of Zostrianos seems to have no specific interest in things Christian. He rejects the ways of the others, his opponents, but it is not clear if they are Christians or Platonists or some other group. His use of liturgical formulas, baptisms, and magical vowel strings indicates the book may have been used by a group of Gnostics in worship or contemplative exercises, but we are unable to identify this group on the basis of the reports of Christian heresiologists.
It [came] upon me alone as I was setting myself straight, [and] I saw the perfect child [...] With him who [...] many times and many ways [he] appeared to me as a loving father, when I was seeking the male father of all (who are) in thought, perception, (in) form, race, [region ...], (in) an All which restrains and is restrained, (in) a body yet without a body, (in) essence, matter and [those that] belong to all these. It is with them and the god of the unborn Kalyptos and the power [in] them all that existence is mixed.

(About) existence: how do those who exist, being from the aeon of those who exist, (come) from an invisible, undivided and self-begotten spirit? Are they three unborn images having an origin better than existence, existing prior [to] all these, yet having become the [world ...]? How are those opposite it and all these good, he and an excuse. What is that one's place? What is his origin? How does the one from him exist for him and all these? How [does he come into existence] as a simple one, differing [from] himself? Does he exist as existence, form, and blessedness? By giving strength is he alive with life? How has the existence which does not exist appeared from an existing power?

I pondered these things to understand them; according to the custom of my race I kept bringing them up to the god of my fathers. I kept praising them all, for my forefathers and fathers who sought found. As for me, I did not cease seeking a resting place worthy of my spirit, since I was not yet bound in the perceptible world. Then, as I was deeply troubled and gloomy because of the discouragement which encompassed me, I dared to act and to deliver myself to the wild beasts of the desert for a violent death.

There stood before me the angel of the knowledge of eternal light. He said to me, Zostrianos, why have you gone mad as if you were ignorant of the great eternals who are above? [...] you [...] say also [...] that you are now saved, [...] in eternal death, nor [...] those whom you know in order to save others, [namely] my father's chosen elect? [Do you] [suppose] that you are the father of [your race ...] or that Iolaos is your father, a angel of god you through holy men? Come and pass through each of these. You will return to them another time to preach to a living [race ...] and to save those who are worthy, and to strengthen the elect, because the struggle of the aeon is great but one's time in this world is short.'

When he had said this [to me], I very quickly and very gladly
went up with him to a great light-cloud. I cast my body upon the earth to be guarded by glories. I was rescued from the whole world and the thirteen aeons in it and their angelic beings. They did not see us, but their archon was disturbed at passage, for the light-cloud it is better than every worldly one. Its beauty is ineffable. With strength it provides light guiding pure spirits as a spirit-savior and an intellectual word, not like those in the world with changeable matter and an upsetting word.

Then I knew that the power in me was set over the darkness because it contained the whole light. I was baptized there, and I received the image of the glories there. I became like one of them. I left the airy-earth and passed by the copies of the aeons, after washing there seven times in living water, once for each of the aeons. I did not cease until I saw all the waters. I ascended to the Exile which really exists. I was baptized and world. I ascended to the Repentance which really exists and was baptized there four times. I passed by the sixth aeon. I ascended to the ... I stood there after having seen light from the truth which really exists, from its self-begotten root, and great angels and glories number.

I was baptized in the [name of] the divine Autogenes by those powers which are [upon] living waters, Michar and Micheus. I was purified by [the] great Barpharanges. Then they revealed themselves to me and wrote me in glory. I was sealed by those who are on these powers, [Michar] Mi[ch]eus, Seldao, Ele[nos] and Zogenethlos. I became a root-seeing angel and stood upon the first aeon which is the fourth. With the souls I blessed the divine Autogenes and the forefather Geradamas, [an eye of] the Autogenes, the first perfect man, and Seth Emmacha Seth, the son of Adamas, the [father of] the immovable race ... and the [four] lights ... ... Mirothea, the mother and Prophania of the lights and De-...]

I was [baptized] for the second time in the name of the divine Autogenes by these same powers. I became an angel of the male race. I stood upon the second aeon which is the third, with the sons of Seth I blessed each of them.

I was baptized for the third time in the name of the divine Autogenes by each of these powers. I became a holy angel. I stood upon the third aeon which is the second. I blessed each of them.

I was baptized for the fourth time by each of these powers. I became a perfect angel [I stood upon] the fourth aeon [which is the first], and [I blessed each of them.]
Then I sought I [...] I said I [...] I 25 [...] of I [...] I I [...] I [...] why [...] I [...] with power [...] 30 about them in another way in the reports 8 of men? Are these their I powers? Or, are these the ones, but I their names differ from one another? Are I there souls different from souls? 5 Why are people different I from one another? What and in what way I are they human?

The great ruler I on high, Authrounios, said to me, "Are you asking about those 10 whom you have passed by? And I about this airy-earth, why I it has a cosmic model? And I about the aeon copies, how I many there are, and, why they are [not] in pain? 15 And, about Exile and I Repentance and the creation of the I [aeons] and the world which [...] I really [...] I you, about [...] 20 me, them [...] I nor [...] I you [...] I invisible [spirit ...] I and the [...] 25 of [...] I [...] I [...] I [...] and [...] 30 [...] when I [...] 9 The great ruler on high, Authrounios, said to me, 'The I airy-earth came into being by a I word, yet it is the begotten 5 and perishable ones whom it reveals I by its indestructibility. In regard to the coming I of the great judges, (they came) so as not I to taste perception and to I be enclosed in creation, and when 10 they came upon it and saw through it the works of the world, I they condemned its ruler to death I because he was a model of the world, I a [...] and an origin of matter 15 begotten of lost darkness. I

When Sophia looked at [...] them I she produced the darkness, as she I [...] she is beside the I [...] he is a] model 20 [...] of essence I [...] form I [...] to an image I [...] I I [...] the All 25 [...] I [...] I [...] darkness [...] I [...] say [...] powers I [...] aeons] of [creation [...] to 30 see any of the eternal ones. 10 he saw a reflection. In relation to I the reflection which he saw I in it, he created the world. I With a reflection of a reflection 5 he worked at producing the world, I and then even the reflection belonging to I visible reality was taken from him. But to I Sophia a place of rest was given I in exchange for her repentance. 10 Thus, there was in her no I prior reflection, pure I in itself beforehand.

After they had I already come into being through it, he I used his imagination (and) produced the 15 remainder, for the image of Sophia I was always being lost because I her countenance was deceiving. But the Archon I [...] and made a body which [...] I concerning the greater [...] 20 down [...] I when I saw [...] I to the heart [...] I [...] I he having [...] 25 [...] I [...] I [...] I [...] I perfect through [...] 30 [...] I [...] through him, as he 11 [revealed] the destruction of the
world by his [immutability]. It is in the following way that the copies of the aeons exist. They have not obtained a single power's shape. It is eternal glories that they possess, and they dwell in the judgment seats of each of the powers.

But when souls are illuminated by the light in them and (by) the model which often comes into being in them without suffering, she did not think that she saw and the eternal in the blessed each single one each of light, and she whole, and she and a and she she who of repentance. [Souls] are located according to the power they have in themselves, lower are produced by the copies. Those who receive a model of their souls are still in the world. They came into being after the departure of the aeons, one by one, and they are removed one by one from the copy of Exile to the Exile that really exists, from the copy of Repentance to the Repentance that really exists, [and from the] copy of Autogenes to [the Autogenes] that really exists. The remainder exist in all of aeons and [through] the [and] 13 [blessed the] god above, the great aeons, the unborn Kalypotos, the great male Protophanes, the perfect child who is higher than god, and his eye, Pigeradamas.

I called upon the Child of the Child, Ephesech. He stood before me and said, 'O angel of god, O son of the father, the perfect man. Why are you calling on me and asking about those things which you know, as though you were [ignorant] of them?' And I said, 'I have asked about the mixture it is perfect and gives there is power which has those in which we receive baptism these names are different and why from one in the [from] others men different and why from a perfect'

14 He said, '[Zost]rianos, I listen about these for the first origins are three because they have appeared in a single origin of the Barbelo aeon, not like some origins and powers, nor like (one) from an origin and power. It is to every origin that they have appeared; they have strengthened every power; and they appeared from that which is far better than themselves. These (three) are Existence, Blessedness and Life. [their companions] in a [and] and concerning the having named more than and a perfect from a
15 And a water of each one of them [ ... ]; therefore [ ... ] waters are the perfect ones. It is the water of life that belongs to Vitality in which you now have been baptized in the Autogenes. It is in the [water] of Blessedness which belongs to Knowledge that you will be baptized in the Protophanes. 10 It is the water of Existence [ ... ] which belongs to Divinity, the Kalyptos. Now the water of Life [ ... ] exists in relation to [ ... ] power; that belonging to Blessedness in relation to essence; [ ... ] that belonging to [Divinity] in relation to [Existence ...].

But all these [ ... ] authority and [ ... ] those who [ ... ] water which [ ... ] according to [ ... ] when they depart [ ... ]

[ ... ] Existence as [he] is in it. [He] not only [was dwelling] in Thought, but he also [ ... ] them that it is he who is [Being] in the following way. In order that this world might not be endless and formless, he placed a [ ... ] over it; [ ... ] but in order that [he] might become something, the truly young crossed it with what is his, [thus] Existence. It is with the [son] that he is located, with him that he seeks, him that he surrounds everywhere [ ... ] from the truth [ ... ] takes him who exists [ ... ] activity [ ... ] life [ ... ] his word also [ ... ] are these after [ ... ] they became [ ... ]

[ ... ] and the power is with the Essence and Existence of Being, when the water exists. But the name in which they wash is a word of the water. Then the first perfect water of the triple-power of the Autogenes is the perfect soul's life, for it is a word of the perfect god while coming into being [ ... ] for the Invisible Spirit is a fountain of them all. Thus, the rest are from [knowledge ...] as his likeness. [But] he who knows himself what kind and what alive at one time [ ... ] live with a [ ... ] he is the [ ... ] life, in the [ ... ] become [ ... ] his [ ... ] the name [ ... ] 25 [ ... ] [ ... ] [ ... ] 18 he really exists. It is he because he limits himself. They approach the water according to this single power and the likeness of order.

The great male invisible Mind, the perfect Protophanes has his own water as you will see when you arrive at his place. This is also the case with the unborn Kalyptos. In accordance with each one exists a partial entity with a first form, so that they might become perfect in this way; the self-begotten aeons are four perfect entities. The individuals of the all-perfect ones [ ... ] them as perfect individuals. And the [ ... ] aeon [ ... ] of the Autogenes [ ... ] for all [ ... ]
[perfect] male [...]

for the alls [...]

[perfect god ...

the triple-

] male [...]

25 [perfect] individual [...]

in the [...]

[...] [...]

[...]

30 [...]

19 perfect, those who exist according to a form, a race, an All and a partial difference. This is also the case with the highway of ascent which is higher than perfect and Kalyptos.

The Autogenes is the chief archon of his own aeons and angels as his parts, for those who are the four individuals belong to him; they belong to the fifth aeon together. The fifth exists in one; the four are the fifth, part by part. But these [four] are complete individually [because they] have a [...] it is also [...] with [the triple male] individual [...] for he is a [...] of god, the invisible [Protophanes] [... male] mind [...] which [...]

25 [...] [...]

20 living and perfect parts.

(About) the All and the all-perfect race and the one who is higher than perfect and blessed. The self-begotten Kalyptos pre-exists because he is an origin of the Autogenes, a god and a forefather, a cause of the Protophanes, a father of the parts that are his. As a divine father he is foreknown: but he is unknown, for he is a power and a father from himself. Therefore, he is [fatherless]. The Invisible Triple Powerful, First Thought of all these, the Invisible Spirit is a [...]

and Essence which [...]

there are [existences] the [...] blessed [...]

all these [...] the [...] [...]

30 [...] 21 exist in them, [and] they [...]

in others [...] by them all in many places. They are in every place that he loves and desires, yet they are not in any place. They have capacity for spirit, for they are incorporeal yet are better than incorporeal. They are undivided with living thoughts and a power of truth with those purer than these since with respect to him they are purer and are not like the bodies which are in one place. Above all, they have necessity either in relation to the All or to a part. Therefore, the way of ascent [...] it is pure [...]

each [...] herself and [...]

them [...]

above all] [...]

22 particular aeons.

Then [he said], 'How then can he contain an eternal model? The general intellect shares when the self-begotten water becomes perfect. It one knows him and all these, one is the protophanic water. If one joins oneself with all these, one is that water which belongs to Kalyptos, whose image is still in the aeons. To understand individually all their parts, they are [...], those of the All where knowledge is. They have [separated] from the one whom they knew
and (from) fellowship with one another. The All and all these, when they wash in the [washing of] [Autogenes] he of [• • •] 25 [• • •] [• • •] [• • •] [• • •] [• • •] 23 he appears to [him], that is, when one knows how he exists for him and (how) he has fellowship with their companions, one has washed in the washing of Protophanes. And if in understanding the origin of these, how they all appear from a single origin, how all who are joined come to be divided, how those who are divided join again, and how the parts [join with] the alls and the species and [kinds — if] one understands these things, one has washed in the washing of Kalyptos.

According to each of [the] places one has a portion of the eternal ones [and] ascends as he pure and simple, he is always [• • •] one of the [always] he is pure for simpleness. He is filled [• • •] [in ...] Existence and a holy spirit. There is nothing of his outside of him. He can [see] with his perfect soul those who belong to Autogenes; with his mind, those who belong to the Triple Male, and with his holy spirit, those who belong to Protophanes. He can learn of Kalyptos through the powers of the spirit from whom they have come forth in a far better revelation of the Invisible Spirit. And by means of thought which now is in silence and by First Thought (he learns) of the Triple Powerful Invisible Spirit, since there is then a report and power of silence which is purified in a life-giving spirit. (It is) perfect and all-perfect.

Glories, therefore, which are set over these, are life-givers who have been baptised in truth and knowledge. Those who are worthy are guarded, but those who are not from this race and go these 25 who in the fifth, he being [• • •] copy of the aeons namely a washing but if [he] strips off the world and lays aside [knowledge], and (if) he is he who has no dwelling place and power, then because he follows the ways of the others, he is also a sojourner, but (if) he is one who has committed no sin because knowledge was sufficient for him, he is not anxious when he repents, and then washings are appointed in these in addition.

(Concerning) (the path ...) to the self-begotten ones, those in which you have now been baptised each time, (a path) worthy of seeing the [perfect ...] individuals: it serves as knowledge of the All since it came into being from the powers of the self-begotten ones, the one you acquire when you pass through the all-perfect aeons. When you receive the third washing [...], you will learn about the really in [that] place.
About these names, they are as follows: because he is one, they a word they 26 This is a name which really exists together with [these] within her. These who exist do so in ... resembles. 5 His resemblance in kind (is) within what is his own. He can see it, understand it enter it, (and) take a resemblance from it. Now they can speak aloud and hear sounds, but they are unable to obey because they are perceptible and somatic. Therefore, just as they are able to contain them by containing them thus, so is he an image which is in this way, having come into existence in perception [by] a word which is better than material nature but lower than intellectual essence.

Do not be amazed about the differences among souls. When they think they are different and do [not resemble] of those who and that he being lost their [souls] body, and that his time, he a desire, 27 their souls exist as their body. As for those who are totally pure, there are four that they possess; but those [in] time are nine. Each one of them has its species and its custom. Their likenesses differ in being separated, and they stand.

Other immortal souls associate with all these souls because of the Sophia who looked down; for there are three species of immortal soul: first, those who have taken root upon the Exile because they have no ability to beget, (something) that only those who follow the ways of the others have, the one being a single species which; being second, those who stand upon the Repentance which sin, (it) being sufficient knowledge being new and he has difference they have sinned with the others [and] 28 they have repented with the others from them alone, for are species which exist in with those who committed all sins and repented. Either they are parts, or they desired of their own accord. Therefore, their other aeons are six according to the place which has come to each (fem.) of them. The third (species) is that of the souls of the self-begotten ones because they have a word of the ineffable truth, one which exists in knowledge and [power] from themselves alone and eternal [life]. They have four differences like the species of angels who exist: 20 those who love the truth; those who hope; those who believe having; those who are They exist, he being the self-begotten ones 25 the self-begotten ones he is the one belonging to [perfect ... life]; the second is ...
knowledge [... the fourth is 30 that one [belonging to the] immortal [souls ...]

29 The four Lights dwell [there] in the following way. [Armozel] is placed upon the first aeon. (He is) a promise of god, [... of] 5 truth and a joining of soul. Oroiael, a power (and) seer of truth, is set over the second. Daveithe, a vision of knowledge, is set over the third. Eleleth, an eager desire and preparation for truth, is set over the fourth. The four exist because they are expressions of truth and knowledge. They exist, although they do not belong to Protophanes but to the mother, for she is a thought of the perfect mind of the light, so that immortal souls might receive knowledge for themselves. [... at these, the Autogenes [...rse[...oas, a life [... all he is a word [... 25 ineffable [... truth he who says [... revelation] concerning the [... 1 that it exists as [...] 1 exists above in [... 30 [... joined] in a yoking of it in light and thought within his [...].

Since Adamas, the perfect man, is an eye of Autogenes, it is his knowledge which comprehends that the divine Autogenes is a word of the perfect mind of truth. The son of Adam, Seth, comes to each of the souls. As knowledge he is sufficient for them. Therefore, [the] living [seed] came into existence from him. Mirothea is [... the divine Autogenes, a [... from her and [...], she being a thought of the perfect mind because of that existence of hers. What is it? Or did she exist? [... 20 does she exist? Therefore, the divine Autogenes is word and knowledge, and the knowledge [... word.] Therefore [... 25 Adama[s [... of the [simple ones] when she appeared [... a change of [the] souls [... she herself is [... [... perfect.

Concerning the [perfect one [... angelic beings 31 [... becomes then] [... the world [... the copies [... really [... which [exists] [... repentance 10 [... to this place [... which exists [... aeons, if [... and she loves [... she stands upon 15 [... [E]le[...] becomes a [... god-seer [... But] if she hopes, then she perceives. And a [... race [... she stands upon [... [... [... 25 [... [... [... 32 [... she is chosen [... [... [... light 5 Ar[mozel] [... one [... [... upon the [power ... you [... the light which [... [... the aeon is great [... [... those alone [... from the perfect [... 15 that power [... be able, and [... be able [... of his soul [... perceptible [... not with [... 20 [... but] you are [... individually [... there
being nothing [... ] him [... ] which he [... ] 25 [... ] [... ] 1 [in ... ] 33 and [... ] upon every one [... ] every [... ] [... ] formless [... ] 5 [... ] and this one [... ] and this [model ... ] [... ] and some [ ... ] eternal, nor [ ... ] an all 10 [ ... ] increasing from this [ ... ] he is light [ ... ] because he lacked [ ... ] the perfect mind [ ... ] undivided 15 [ ... ] perfect light [ ... ] and he is in [ ... ] Adamas [ ... ] the] Autogenes [ ... ] and he goes 20 [ ... ] mind [ ... ] the divine Kalyptos [ ... ] knowledge [ ... ] but [ ... ] soul 25 [ ... ] [ ... ] [ ... ] 1 [ ... ] 1 [ ... ] 34 [ ... ] existence [ ... ] she having [ ... ] [ ... ] some second 5 powers and [ ... ] and some third [ ... ] appear [ ... ] which [ ... ] 1 [ ... ] 10 soul [... ] 1


[. . .] divine, the Autogenes. 10 [The] divine [Autogenes] [. . .] the child [. . .] triple-male, this male [. . .] is [. . .] and a species [. . .] perfect because it does not have 15 [. . .] in a [. . .] knowledge like that one [. . .] a being of the individuals [. . .] and a single knowledge of the individuals [. . .] according to the all 20 [. . .] perfect. 1 But the male [. . .] mind [. . .] the Kalyptos, 1 [but] the [. . .] divine Kalyptos [. . .] [. . .] and a power 25 [. . .] of all these [. . .] 1 [. . .] 25 [. . .] 30 [Protophanes [. . .]] [. . .] 42 [Protophanes [. . .]] [. . .] mind [. . .] [. . .] 5 she who belongs to the all [. . .] unborn [. . .] man [. . .] they [. . .] with that one who [. . .] 10 and he who [. . .] he who dwells [. . .] [. . .] 1 [. . .] 15 obtain salvation [. . .] that dead one.

And all of them [. . .] did not need salvation [. . .] first, but they are safe [. . .] and exist very humbly. 20 Now (about) the man [of] those who are dead: 1 his soul, [his mind and 1 his body all [are dead]. 1 Sufferings [. . .] fathers of [. . .] 25 material [. . .] the fire [. . .] [. . .] [. . .] [. . .] 30 [. . .] 43 it crosses over. And the second 1 man is the immortal soul 1 in those who are dead. 1 If it is anxious over itself, then 5 [when it seeks] those 1 things which are profitable [according to . . .] each one 1 of them, [then it] experiences 1 bodily suffering. They 1 [. . .] and it 10
Now concerning the man in the Exile; when he discovers the truth in himself, he is far from the deeds of the others who exist wrongly (and) stumble. (Concerning) the man who repents: when he renounces the dead and desires those things which are because of immortal mind and his immortal soul, first he makes an inquiry about it, not about conduct but about their deeds, for from him he and ... and obtain the man who can be saved is the one who seeks him and his mind and who finds each one of them. Oh how much power he has! And the man who is saved is the one who has not known how these exist, but he himself by means of [the] word received each one in every place, having become simple and one, for then he is saved because he can pass through all [these]. He becomes the all these. If he [desires] again, then he parts from them all, and he withdraws to himself [alone]; for he can become divine by having taken refuge in god.'

When I heard this, I brought a blessing to the living and unborn God in truth and (to) the unborn Kalyptos and the Protophanes, the invisible, male, perfect Mind, and the invisible triple-male Child [and to the] divine Autogenes. I said to the child of the child Ephesek who was with me, "Can your wisdom instruct me about the scattering of the man who is saved, and (about) those who are mixed with him, and who those are who share with him, in order that the living elect might know?"

Then the child of the child Ephesek told me openly, "If he withdraws to himself alone many times, and if he comes into being with reference to the knowledge of the others, Mind and the immortal [Origin] will not understand. Then it has a shortage, for he turns, has nothing and separates from it and stands and comes into being by an alien impulse, instead of becoming one. Therefore, he bears many forms. When he turns aside, he comes into being seeking those things that do not exist. When he falls down to them in thought and knows them in another way because he is powerless, unless perhaps he is enlightened, he becomes a product of nature. Thus he comes down to birth because of it and is speechless because of the pains and infiniteness of matter. Although he possesses an eternal and immortal power, he is bound within the [movement] of the body. He is alive and is bound [always] within cruel, cutting bonds by every evil breath, until he [acts] again and begins again to come to his senses.
Therefore, 1 powers are appointed for their salvation, 1 and each one of them is 1 in the world. Within the self-begotten 1 ones corresponding to each of 20 the [aeons] stand glories 1 so that one who is in the [world] 1 might be safe beside them. The glories 1 are perfect thoughts appearing in 1 powers. They do not perish because they [are] models 25 for salvation [by] which each 1 one is saved. 1 He receives a model (and) 1 strength from each of them, and 1 with the glory as a helper 30 he will thus pass out from the world 1 [and the aeons . . .].

These 47 are the guardians of the immortal 1 soul: Gamaliel and 1 Strempsouchos, Akramas 1 and Loel, and Mnesinous. 5 [This is the] immortal spirit, Yesseus- 1 Mazareu[s]-Ye[s]sedekews. 1 He is [. . .] of the child 1 [. . .] or, the child of the child, and 1 [. . .] But Ormos 10 is [. . .] on the living seed 1 and Kam[. . .]el is the spirit-giving. 1 There stand before [them] 1 Seisaul and Audael and Abrasax, 1 the myriads-Phaleris, Phalse, 15 [and] Euriou, the guardians of 1 [the] glory-Stetheus, 1 Theo[pe]mptos, Euruumeus 1 and Olsen. Their assistants in 1 everything are Ba[. . .]mos, 20 [. . .], Eir[. . .], Lalameus, 1 Eidomeneus and Authrounios. 1 The judges are Sumpthtar, 1 Eukrebos and Keilar. 1 The inheritor is Samblo. 25 The angels who guide 1 the clouds are the clouds Sappho 1 and Thouro.”

When he had said 1 these things, he told me about all of those 1 in the self-begotten 30 aeons. They were all 48 eternal Lights, perfect 1 because they were perfected individually. 1 I saw corresponding to each one of 1 the aeons a living earth, a 5 living water, [air made] 1 of light and a fire [that] 1 cannot burn, because all of [them . . .] are 1 simple and im­mutable, 1 simple and 10 eternal [living beings], 1 having [. . .] of 1 many kinds, trees 1 of many kinds that do not 1 perish, [also] tares 15 of this sort and all of these: 1 imperishable fruit, 1 living men and every species, 1 immortal souls, 1 every form and 20 species of mind, 1 true gods, 1 angels existing in 1 great glory, an 1 indissoluble body, 25 an unborn birth and 1 an immovable perception. 1 Also there was the one who 1 suffers, although he is unable to suffer, 1 for he was a power of a power.

49 [. . .] 1 [. . .] change 1 [. . .] indissoluble 1 [. . .] these 5 [. . .] all 1 [. . .] they are [. . .] they 1 [. . . through all] of them 1 [. . . exist] in 1 [. . .] exist 10 [. . .] come into being 1 [. . .] (lines 12ff do not survive) 50 of [. . .] 1 [simple . . .] 1 perfect [. . .] 1 eternal [. . .] 5 aeons [. . .] 1 and the [. . .] 1 receive power [. . .] 1 and their [. . .] 1 in a [. . .] 10 for [. . .] 1 [. . .] not [. . .] (lines 12ff do not survive)

51 [. . .] in 1 [. . .] thorso[. . .]s 1 [. . .] silence 1 [. . .] he is [. . .] 5 [. . .]
he is god [...], we were blessing [...], Geradama[s] [...], mother of [...], she is the glory [...], our [...], mother [...], and Pleistha [...], the mother of the angels with [...], the son of Adam, Seth [...], [Emma]cha Seth, the father of [...], the immaculate, race [...], and [...], the four Lights, Arm[mosel], Oroia[jel], Daveithe, Eleleth. [...], Each of these we blessed by name. [...], We saw the self-controlled [glory], the triple [...], triple-male [...], majesty, as we said, ‘You are one, you are [...], child 52 of [...], Yato[...], exist [...], [...], you are [...], one, you [...], Semelel [...], Telmacha[e] [...], omothem[...], 10 male [...], he begets [...], the self-controlled [glory [...], can desire him whom [...], all-perfect [...], all. Akron [...], the triple-male, a [...], you are spirit from [...], you are light [...], from light; you are [...], thought from thought, the son of [...], the god, seven [...], let us speak [...], 53 [...], [...], word 5 [...], the [...], and the [...] [...], [...], not a time [...], invisible 10 Barbelo [...], the [...], the triple-male Prones, and she who belongs to [...], all the glories, Youel.

15 [When I was] baptized the fifth [...], in the name of the [...], Autogenes by [...], each of these powers, I [...], became divine. [...], I stood upon the fifth [...], a preparation of [...], all [...], (and) saw all those [...], belonging to the Autogenes [...], who really exist. [...], I was baptized five 54 times [...], and [...], of the [...], zareu[s] 5 from [...], that [...], perfect [...], and the great [...], glory, she who belongs to [...], [...], god, the [...], appear [...], perfect which is doubled [...], she who belongs to all the species [...], male, the self-controlled [...], glory, the mother [...], the glories, Youel, and the [...], [four] Lights of [...], [great] Protophanes, [...], Mind, Selmen, [and those] [...], with him, the [...], [god-revealers] Zach[thos] [...], and Yachthos, Sethe[us] [...], and Antiphane[ts], [Sel-] 25 dao and Ele[nn]os [...], 55 [...], go [...], the [...], likeness [...], exist as [...], of the [...], for [...], see [...], [...], aeon 10 [...], more [...], Light [...], more glories [...], the following are in accordance with [...], each one of the aeons; a 15 living [earth] and a [...], [living] water, and air made of [...], light and a blazing [...], fire which cannot [...], burn, and living beings and 20 trees and souls [...], minds and men [...], all those who are [...], with them, but (there are) no gods [...], [or] powers or 25 angels, for all these 56 are [...], and [...], and [...], exist [...], all [...], all [...], all [...], all [...], they being [...], and they being [...].

10 [...], and [...], [and] those [...], him, the Autogenes. [...],
received a likeness from [all] these. 1 The aeons [of the] Autogenes 15 opened (and) a [great Light] 1 came forth [...] from the aeons of the [triple-] 1 male, and they [glorified] 1 them. The four 20 aeons were desiring 1 within a [...] aeon 1 the [...] pattern [...] 1 single one existing [...] 1 Then E[phesek], the 25 child of the child [...] 57 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] Yesseus] Maza 1 [reus Yessedekeus [...] 1 [...] of [...] seal [...] upon him [...] and Gabriel 10 [...] 1 [...] seal [...] 1 [...] four races 1

There came before me she who belongs to 1 [the glories], the male and 15 [virginal ...] Yoel. 1 [I] deliberated about the crowns, 1 (and) she said to me, "Why 1 [has] your spirit deliberated 1 [about] the crowns and the 20 [seals] on them [...] are the crowns which strengthen 1 every [spirit ...] and every soul, 1 and [the] seals which are 1 [upon] the triple races and 25 [...] the invisible spirit 58 are [...] [...] [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] seek [...] 1 [...] in the [...] 10 [in] them [...] [...] and [...] [...] he [strengthened] 1 and the seals [...] 1 race are those belonging to the Autogenes 15 and the Protophanes 1 and the Kalyptos.

The [Invisible] 1 Spirit [is] a psychic 1 and intellectual power, 1 a knower and 20 a fore-knower. Therefore 1 he is with [Gabriel] 1 the spirit-giver [so that] 1 when he gives a 1 holy spirit he might 25 seal him with the crown and crown him, 1 [having] gods [...] 59 [...] 1 [...] the [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] the [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 spirit [...] to one (fem.) 10 [...] [...] they exist [...] and they were 1 not [in] them in order that they might 1 [become] simple 15 and [might] not be doubled 1 [according to] any pattern. 1 [These] then are the 1 simple, perfect individuals. [...] and all these 20 [...] of the aeons [...] him, all these [...] 1 [...] who exist in a place [...] all-perfect it required a great 1 [...] to see them, 25 for [...] 60 [...] [...] 1 [...] 1 perfect [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] every [...] 1 exist [...] 1 he is [...] 10 [hear] him [...] [...] and [...] 1 in thought [...] 1 a first thought [...] 1 since [...] is in a power 15 she is perfect [...] 1 it is fitting for you to [...] 1 about everything, and [...] 1 those to whom you will listen 1 through a thought 20 of those higher than perfect 1 and also those whom you will [know] 1 in a soul [of] 1 the perfect ones." 1

[When] she has said this, she [baptized me] 61 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] the first [...] and] I received power [...] 10 [...] I] received the form [...] received [...] 1 [...] existing upon my [...] receive a holy spirit [...] [I] came into being [really] existing. 15

Then, she brought me 1 into the great [aeon] 1 where the perfect 1 triple-
male (is). I saw the invisible child within an invisible Light. Then [she] baptized me again in her [and] I was able to the great one and perfect

Yoel who belongs to all [the glories] said to me, "You have received all the [baptisms] in which it is fitting to be baptized, and you have become [perfect] the hearing of all. Now [call] again upon Salamex and and the all-perfect Ar[...] the Lights of the [aeon] Barbelo and the immeasurable knowledge. They will reveal [... invisible [... which [...] [... virgin] Barbelo [and] the Invisible [triple] powerful Spirit."

[When] Youel who belongs to all the glories [had said this] to me, she [put me down] and went and stood before the Protophanes. Then, I was over my spirit, while praying fervently to the great Lights in thought. I began calling upon Salamex and Se- [...]. I saw glories which are greater than powers, [and] they anointed me. I was able in my [...] and [...]

she covered all Salamex [and] those [who] have revealed everything [to me] saying, "Zostrianos, [learn] of those things about which you asked. [...] and [he is] a single one who exists before all these who really exist in the immeasurable and undivided Spirit [... and] the All which exists in him and the [...] and that one which after him. It is he alone who crosses it [...]

all these he is [... first [...] of every power downward] he is established stand, he [passes] into the pathway to a place and infinite. He is far higher than every unattainable one, yet he gives greater than any body (and) is purer than every unembodied one, entering every thought and every body [because he] is more powerful than everything, every race and species, as their All. 66 exist to a partial part [exist] in a know her [...]. From him which really exists, who (is) from the Spirit who [really] exists, the one alone [... for they are powers of Existence [...] and Life and Blessedness.

In Existence he exists as a simple head, his [word] and species. Let the one who will find him come into existence. Existing in
Life, he is alive [...] 67 [...] 1 [he having] knowledge 1 [...] know all these 5 [...] him alone 1 [...] for god [...] 1 unless [...] 1 [...] alone, and he [...] 1 [...] in him [...] 10 [...] the single [...] 1 [...] for he exists as [...] 1 [in] that which is his, which 1 [exists] as a form of a form, 1 [...] unity of the 15 [...]. He exists as [the] 1 [...] since he is in 1 [the] mind. He is within 1 it, not coming forth to any 1 place because he is a single 20 perfect, simple spirit. 1 [Because] it is his place and 1 [...], it is within him and the All 1 that he comes into being. 1 It is he who exists, he who 68 [...] 1 [...] and a [...] 1 and a [protector] 1 in him.

Life [...] 5 and activity of the 1 insubstantial [...] the [...] 1 which exists in him 1 [exists] in him [...] 1 exists because of [him ...] 10 blessed and a [...] 1 perfect, and [...] 1 which exist in [...] 1 which really exists. 1 The form of the activity 15 which exists is blessed. 1 By receiving Existence, 1 he receives power, the [...] 1 a perfection [...] 1 separate forever. Then 20 he exists as a perfect one. Therefore, 1 he exists as a perfect one 1 because he is undivided 1 with his own region, 1 for nothing exists 25 before him except 1 the [perfect] unity.

(Pages 69-72 are blank; they may have been numbered.)

73 existence [...] 1 [...] she is salvation [...] 1 [all ...] and he [...] 1 [...] be able, nor does he [...] 5 [...] him, if he 1 [...] him to him, all these [...] 1 [...] for he [who] 1 [...] in existence [...] 1 this one, he totally 10 [exists] as Life, and in 1 Blessedness he has knowledge. 1 If he apprehends the 1 [glories], he is perfect; 1 but if he apprehends 15 [two] or one, he is drunk, 1 as he has received 1 [from] him. It is because of [him] 1 that there exist those with souls 1 and those without souls; 20 because of him (exist) those who will be saved; 1 because of him (exist) those who will 1 [perish] since they have not [received] 1 from him; because of 1 [him] (exists) matter and 25 bodies; because of him (exist) non- 74 [...] 1 [because of] him [...] 1 every [...] because of [...] 1 [...] this one [...] who [pre-] 5 exists and he [...] 1 [...] a [simple] head, 1 [a] single spirit [...] 1 he is [...], and [...] 1 existence, form, [...] 10 [...] of him.

It is [in accordance with] 1 Activity, that is [...] Life, 1 and in accordance with perfection, 1 that is intellectual 1 power, that she is a [...] Light. 15 It is at one time that the three stand, 1 at one time they move. 1 It is in every place yet 1 not in any place that the ineffable 1 un-nameable one [...] 20 and produces 1 them all. [...] 1 exist from him[...] 1 resting in him [...] 1 in her perfection 25 he has not received from [every] form 75 because of him 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] anything
[...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] in existence 1 [...] dwell in the 1 [...] of life. But in 10 perfection and 1 knowledge (is) Blessedness.

All [these] dwell 1 in the indivisibility of 1 the] Spirit. Because of 15 knowledge [...] is 1 [divinity] and [...] 1 and blessedness 1 and life and 1 knowledge and goodness 20 and unity 1 and singleness. 1 In short, all these (are) the 1 purity of barrenness 1 [...] pre-exists him 25 [...] all these and the 76 [...] his [...] 1 [...] in [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 aeon, a [...] 1 in a [...] 1 barrenness, he [...] 10 he always [...] 1 him when he saw him [...] 1 It is because he [is] one that he is 1 simple. Because he is 1 Blessedness in 15 perfection [...] one, 1 perfect and [blessed]. 1 It is because she was in need of his [...] 1 that she was in need of this from him, 1 because he followed [her] 20 with knowledge. 1 It is outside of him that 1 his knowledge dwells; 1 it dwells with the one who 1 examines himself, 25 a reflection and a [...] 77 [...] be in need of [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] simple 1 [...] 5 [...] and 1 [...] he [...] 1 [...] this, she [...] 1 [...] the pleroma 1 [...] which she did not desire 10 for herself.

She has [...] him outside of the 1 [perfection], she has divided, 1 for she is [the] all-perfection 1 [of] perfection, 15 existing as thought. 1 With respect to him 1 [she] is a begetting which follows 1 him, and as one from 1 his ineffable power 20 she has 1 a first power and 1 the first barreness 1 after him, 1 because with respect to all the 25 rest a first aeon 78 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 of the [...] 1 [...] and him [...] 1 know him, he really 1 exists as an aeon [...] 10 and in Activity [...] 1 power and a [...] 1 she did not begin [...] 1 time, but she [appeared] 1 from eternity, 15 having stood before 1 him in eternity. 1 She was darkened by the 1 majesty of his [...] 1 She stood 20 looking at him and rejoicing 1 because she was filled with his 1 kindness, [...] 1 but when she had [...] 79 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] she [...] 1 [...] first existence 1 [...] insubstantial and 1 that [...] 10 It is [from] the undivided one 1 that [it] moves toward Existence 1 in activity and [intellectual] 1 perfection and intellectual life, 1 which was 15 Blessedness and 1 Divinity.

The [whole] Spirit, 1 perfect, simple 1 and invisible, 1 has become singleness 20 in Existence and 1 activity and a 1 simple triple-[power], 1 an invisible spirit, an 1 image of that which 25 really exists, the one 80 [...] 1 [...] 1 [...] 5 [...] 1 [...] 1 of the really [existing] one [...] 1 [he] exists in a [...] 1 she being an image [...] 1 in a turning [...] 10 power to join with his [...] 1 she having seen the [...] 1 which existed [...] 1 all-perfection [...] 1 that one, because he [...] 15 pre-exist and
rest upon all these, he [.] pre-exist being known [.] as triple-powerful.

The Invisible Spirit has not ever [been] ignorant. He always knew, but he was always perfection [and] blessedness [.] She became ignorant [.] and she [.] body and [.] promise [.] in order that she might not come forth anymore nor come into existence apart from perfection. She knew herself and him. Having made herself stand, she was at rest because of him, since she was [from] him who really exists, [she was from him who really exists] and all those. (Thus), she knows herself and him who pre-exists.

By following him they came into being existing [they came into being existing] and appearing through those who pre-exist. And [.] through the [.] they having appeared [.] two [.] they appeared [the one] who knows him beforehand, as an eternal space, since he had become his second knowledge, once again the knowledge of his knowledge, the unborn Kalyptos. [They] stood upon him who really exists, for she knew about him, in order that those who follow her might come into being having a place and that those who come forth (from her) might not be before her but might become holy (and) simple. She is the comprehension of god who pre-exists. She rested to the simple salvation light which was fore-known. She was called Barbelo because (of her being) thought; the triple race (which is) male, virginal (and) perfect and her knowledge through which she came into being in order that they might not her down and that she might not come forth anymore through those in her and those who follow her. Rather, she is simple in order that she might be able to know the god who pre-exists because she came into being as a good (product) of him since she barrenness third [.] two [.] of this way [.] and male [.] [.] [.] and the barrenness [.] [.] she is a second [.] she stood first of the reality which really exists [.] the blessedness [of the Invisible Spirit], the knowledge [.] the first existence in the simplicity of the Invisible Spirit in the unity. It is in that pure singleness that he is similar and [.] species. And he who [.] exist [.] [.] [.] [.] [.] [.] [.] [.] and knows [.] and the [perfection] and [.] produces and the first Kalyptos them all, existence and activity, divinity, race and species.
But are powers one? In what way is it that he is one, that is, not a partial one, but (one of) those of the All? What is the unity which is unity? Is he from activity [life and of]. And [activity] 86 [life and of] 5 power as [the]

[...] perceptible all-perfect she having spoken, "You are great, Aphredon. You are perfect, Neph[redon]." To his existence she says, "You are great, Deipha[...]. She [is] his activity and life and divinity. You are great, Harmbedon, who belongs to all the glories, Epiph[a-]
his blessedness and the perfection of the singleness all [...]’ 87 [activity] 5 [forever] 1 intellectual [perfect] 10 [the virgin Barb]elo through the simplicity of the blessedness of the triple powerful Invisible Spirit. She who has known him has known herself. And he, being one everywhere, being undivided, having has and she has known [herself as] his activity and he has known knowledge within

88 [all] 1 [bless] 10 [Be[rithes, Erignaor], Or[imeni]os, Ar[amen], Alph[ege], Elilio[upheus], Lalamenus, Noetheus] great is your name it is strong. He who knows (it) knows everything. You are one, you are one, Siou, E[...], Aphredon, you are the [aeon] of the aeons of the perfect great one, the first Kalyptos of the [activity, and] he is [his image] 25 of his, he [...]


All these come, as it were, from him who is pure. If you give
glory because of him, and if you existence his a simple he will that one perfect he being perfect and perfect his him to the he was not able to see her. Therefore, it is impossible to receive him in this way in majestic purity as a perfect head of [him who] is in [which] him concerning say it [which] [which] for [exist] together [and] [and] [and] nor differences between these and angels, and differences between these and men, and differences between these and existence. And [and] and [perception] really for the [perceptible] world like existence [for] and [and] (lines 20ff do not survive) will approach him in knowledge. He receives power, but he who is far from him is humbled."

And I said, "Why then have the judges come into being? What is the suffering of the for and fill she appears knowledge she stands (lines 22ff, ca. 4 lines, do not survive) male, since she is knowledge [of] the triple powerful invisible great Spirit, the image of the first Kalyptos, the blessedness in the invisible Spirit, for he knows fill she appears knowledge she stands (lines 21ff, ca. 6 lines, do not survive) a perfect unity of a complete unity, and when she divided the All from the All existence and the thoughts [...] [perception] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] (lines 22ff, ca. 5 lines, do not survive) [...] [...] [...] [existence] [...] [...] in [...] which knowledge [...] [...] [...] [...] she blesses [...] [...] [...] [...] which which [...] and [...] (lines 21ff, ca. 6 lines, do not survive)

[...] [...].
104 [...] she appears [...] of those who [...] of the [...] and [...] this [...] the [...] [...] see [...] [...] see [...] [...] see [...] [...] see [...] [...] he [...] really [...] that [...] and [...] [...] 20 [...] [...] [...] (lines 24ff, ca. 4 lines, do not survive) 105 are those who [...] the aeon of [...] come up to [...] [...] which exist in [...] he [...] on the one hand [...] he [...] one [...] an origin 10 [...] and [...] he [...] matter [...] single 15 [...] [...] exist [...] [...] which 20 [...] and [...] (lines 22ff, ca. 4 lines, do not survive) 106 [...] and he exists [...] he is [...] and [...] mark of a [...] [...] nor of [...] [...] he [...] which [...] [...] 10 and [...] [...] number [...] live [...] according to [...] 15 which [...] [...] [...] [...] 1 [...] [...] [...] 20 which [...] [...] [...] (lines 23ff, ca. 4 lines, do not survive) 107 them [...] [...] and [...] existence [...] [...] and the [...] exist 5 as [...] reflection [...] first [...] [...] first [...] of the 10 [...] [...] he [...] [...] 15 [...] [...] [...] [...] [...] 20 [...] [...] (lines 22ff, ca. 6 lines, do not survive) 108 [...] not, they giving [...] [...] he who exists [...] [...] all and [...] he [...] a multitude 5 [...] creation [...] and [...] [...] 10 the [...] [...] in the [...] these [...] the [...] 15 of [...] alive [...] [...] [...] [...] 20 [...] in [...] [...] (Pages 109-112 do not survive) 113 and angels and [... daimons and minds and souls and living beings and ... trees and bodies and 5 those which are before them: those of the simple elements of simple origins, and those which are in the [...] and unmixed confusion, air 10 and water and earth and number and yoking and movement and [...] and order and breath and all the rest. They are 15 fourth powers which are [... in the fourth aeon, those which are in the [...] and [...] perfect of [...] powers [...] powers [...] of 20 [...] of [... angels [of the] angels, souls [of the] souls, living beings [of the] living beings, trees [of] 25 [the trees ...] and [...] [...] [...] 114 his own.
There are those \( \text{who} \) are as begotten, and those who are in an un-born \( \text{begetting}, \) and there are those who are holy and eternal, \( \text{and} \) the immutable ones in death and destruction in indestructibility; \( \text{and} \) there are those who are as \( \text{All}; \) \( \text{there} \) are those \( \text{races} \) and those who are \( \text{in} \) \( \text{worlds} \) and \( \text{order}; \) \( \text{there} \) are those in \( \text{indestructibility}, \) \( \text{and} \) there are the first \( \text{stand} \) \( \text{all} \) of them. \( \text{All} \) those \( \text{are} \) \( \text{from} \) \( \text{them} \) \( \text{and} \) [those who] \( \text{are} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{them}, \) \( \text{and} \) [from] \( \text{these who} \) [follow] \( \text{them} \) \( \text{standing} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{aeons} \) \( \text{stood} \) \( \text{they existing} \) \( \text{they} \) \( \text{existing} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{them}, \) \( \text{he} \) being scattered abroad. \( \text{They} \) are not crowded against one another, \( \text{but} \) to the contrary they are alive, \( \text{existing} \) in themselves and agreeing with one another, \( \text{as} \) \( \text{they} \) are from a single \( \text{origin}. \) They are reconciled \( \text{because} \) they are all \( \text{in} \) a single aeon of Kalyptos, \( \text{being divided} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{power}; \) \( \text{they} \) exist in accord with each \( \text{of} \) the \( \text{aeons}, \) standing in \( \text{relationship} \) to the one which \( \text{has} \) reached them. \( \text{But} \) Kalyptos is \( \text{a} \) single aeon; \( \text{he} \) has four different \( \text{aeons}. \) In accord with \( \text{each} \) of the \( \text{aeons} \) \( \text{they} \) have \( \text{powers}, \) not \( \text{like} \) first and second \( \text{powers}, \) \( \text{for} \) all these \( \text{are} \) \( \text{eternities,} \) \( \text{but} \) they are different \( \text{and} \) order and glory \( \text{which} \) exists \( \text{four} \) \( \text{aeons} \) \( \text{who} \) pre-exists \( \text{god} \) \( \text{they} \) \( \text{are} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{aeons}. \) \( \text{All} \) of them exist \( \text{in} \) one, dwelling together \( \text{and} \) perfected individually \( \text{in} \) fellowship and \( \text{filled} \) with the \( \text{aeon} \) \( \text{really} \) exists. There are those among them \( \text{who} \) \( \text{stand} \) \( \text{as} \) dwelling in essence \( \text{and} \) those \( \text{stand} \) as essence \( \text{in} \) conduct or \( \text{suffering} \) \( \text{because} \) they are in a second, \( \text{for} \) the unengenderedness of the \( \text{one} \) \( \text{who} \) really \( \text{exists} \) is among them. When the \( \text{ungenerated} \) \( \text{come} \) into being, their \( \text{power} \) \( \text{stands}; \) there is an incorporeal \( \text{essence} \) \( \text{imperishable} \) \( \text{body}. \) The \( \text{immutable one} \) \( \text{is} \) \( \text{there} \) \( \text{who} \) \( \text{really} \) \( \text{exists} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{destructible fire} \) \( \text{stands} \) \( \text{in} \) \( \text{all} \) \( \text{one} \) \( \text{he} \) \( \text{stands} \). It is there that all living beings dwell, \( \text{existing} \) \( \text{individually} \) \( \text{all} \) \( \text{joined} \) together. The knowledge of the knowledge is there together with a setting up of ignorance. Chaos is there \( \text{and} \) a perfect place \( \text{for} \) all of them, \( \text{and} \) they are strange. \( \text{True Light} \) (is there), also enlightened darkness together with the one \( \text{who} \) \( \text{does} \) not really exist — \( \text{he} \) does not really exist. \( \text{the} \) \( \text{non-existing} \) \( \text{not} \) exist at all. But it is he, the Good, \( \text{from} \) \( \text{whom} \) \( \text{comes} \) \( \text{the} \) \( \text{good} \) and what is pleasant \( \text{and} \) \( \text{the} \) \( \text{divine} \); (it is he) \( \text{from} \) \( \text{whom} \) \( \text{comes} \) \( \text{God} \) and he who \( \text{he} \) \( \text{is} \) \( \text{great}. \) For \( \text{in} \) \( \text{part} \) \( \text{form} \) and
God 1 that [...] and the one [...] 1 [...] a god [...] 25 [...] all these [...] 1 [...] darkness [...] 1 [...] 118 and a race. He has 1 not mixed with anything, but he remains 1 alone in himself and 1 rests himself on his 5 limitless limit. 1 He is [the] God of those who 1 really exist, a seer 1 and a revealer of God. 1

When she had strengthened him who [knew her], 10 the aeon Barbelo, the 1 knowledge of the Invisible Triple 1 Powerful Perfect Spirit, in order to [...] 1 her, said, "He [...] 1 a life. I am alive in [...] 15 You, the One, are alive. He is alive, [he] 1 who is three. It is you who are [the] 1 three who are three [doubled ...] 1 e e e. The first of seven [...] 1 the third [...] 20 the second [...] 1 e e e e a a a a a [... ] 1 [...] two, but he [four ... ] 1 [...] knowledge [...] 1 [...] 25 [...] 119 a part? What kind of mind, and 1 what kind of wisdom? What kind of understanding, 1 what kind of teaching? His 1 Lights are named (as follows): the first 5 [is Arme]don and she who is with him, 1 [...] ; the second is 1 Diphane [...] and she who is with him, Dei- 1 ph[a ... ]; the third is 1 [Malsed]on and she who is with him 10 [...] ; the fourth is 1 [...] s and she who is with him, Olmis. 1

Kalyptos exists having 1 [...] with his Form. 1 He is invisible to all 15 these so that they all might be 1 strengthened by him [...] 1 [...] he exists in 1 [...] all-perfect because 1 [he has] four existing 20 [...] 1 [...] nor according to a 1 [...] alone 1 [...] B]arbelo [...] 1 [...] 25 [...] 120 know him and the one who is set 1 over a second. The first 1 of the aeons is Harmedon, 1 the father-glory. The second 5 Light (is) one whom [he does] not [know], 1 but all the [individuals], 1 wisdom [...] exist 1 in the fourth aeon 1 who has revealed [himself] 10 and all the glories. [The third] 1 Light (is) he [...] 1 not him, as the word of all 1 [the forms] and that other 1 [glory], understanding, [who is] 15 in the third [aeon]. 1

There are four in 1 Malsedon and [...] 1 nios. The fourth 1 Light is the one who [...] 20 of all the forms 1 existing [...] 1 a teaching and glory [...] 1 and the truth of the [four aeons], 1 Olmis, [...] and the [...] 25 [...] 1 [...] 121 fifth.

The first (is the one) 1 who is the second, that is, it is 1 the all-perfect Kalyptos, 1 for the four Lights 5 exist. It is Kalyptos who has 1 divided again, and they exist together. 1 All who know those who 1 exist as glories 1 are perfect. This one 10 [...] knows everything about 1 them all is all-perfect. 1 From him is every 1 power, every one and 1 their entire aeon, because they all 15 come to him and 1 they all come from him, 1 the power of them 1 all (and) the origin of them all. 1 When he learned 20 [of them], he became a 1 [...] aeon and a 1 ingenerateness. 1 [...]
other aeons [in ...] a [... ] 25 [ ...] 1 [ ...] 122 become a Barbelo, he becomes a first aeon because of the eternity of the Invisible Spirit, the second 5 ingenerateness. These are all the glories: the limitless Aphredons, [ ...] the ineffables, the revealers, all the [ ...] immutables, 10 the glory-revealers, the twice-revealed Marsedons, the limitless Solmises, the self-revealers who are [full] 15 of glory, those who [wait for] glory, the blessers, the M[arse-] dons, the Kalyptoi who [ ...] the limits [ ...] upon the limits [ ...] 20 those who exist [ ...] 1 [ ...] 1 [ ...] (Lines 24ff, 1 or 2, do not survive) 123 ten thousand glories in them. Therefore, he is a perfect glory so that whenever he can join (another) and 5 prevail, he exists as perfect. Thus, even if he enters into a body and a death (coming) from matter, they do not receive greater honor because of their all-perfectness from whom came all these, being perfect, together with those who are with him. Indeed, each of the aeons has ten thousand aeons 15 in himself, so that by existing together he may become a perfect aeon.

He exists in the [Blessedness] of the Triple Powerful Perfect Invisible 20 [Spirit ...] silence [ ...] who became first [ ...] and the knowledge [ ...] 1 [ ...] 25 [ ...] 124 whole, a silence of the second knowledge, the first thought in the will of the Triple Powerful, because he commanded it to know him, so that he might become all-perfect and perfect in himself. By simplicity and blessedness he is known. [I received] goodness through that follower of the Barbelo aeon who gives being to himself. is not the power, but she is the one who belongs to him.

The aeons which really exist do so in silence. Existence was inactivity, and knowledge of the self-established Kalyptos was ineffable. Having come [from the] fourth, the [ ...] thought, the Protophanes, as (the) Perfect Male [Mind] [ ...] 125 he is his image, equal to him in power and glory but with respect to order higher than him, (yet not higher) in aeon. 5 Like him he has all these (parts) living (and) dwelling together in one. Together with the aeon in the aeons he has a fourfold difference with all the rest who are there.

But Kalyptos really exists, and with him is located she who belongs to all the glories, Youel, the male virgin glory, through whom are seen the all-perfect ones. Those who stand before him are the triple child, the triple 20 [ ...] the Autogenes [ ...] He has [ ...] in one [ ... the one] again who prevails over the existing in [ ...] 25 126 of ten thousand-fold.
The first aeon in him, from whom is the first Light, (is) Solmis and the god revealer, since he is infinite according to the type in the Kalyptos aeon and Doxomedon. The second aeon is Akremon the ineffable together with the second Light Zachtos and Yachtos. The third aeon is Ambrosios the virgin together with the third Light Setheus and Antiphantes. The fourth aeon is the blesser race with the fourth Light Seldao and Elenos.

The Arm[...] him [...] Arm[edon] [...] 127 phoe zoe zoe ze[...] zosi zosi zao zeooz lesen zes- en – the individuals and the four who are eight-fold are alive. You who are before them, and you who are in them all. They are within the perfect male Armedon Protophanes of all those who dwell together. Since all the individuals were existing as perfect ones, the Activity of all the individuals appeared again as the divine Autogenes.

He stands within an aeon because there are within him four different self-begotten aeons. The first aeon in him as the first Light (is) Harmoze]-Orneos-Euthrou- nios. He was called [...] [...] The] second [aeon as] [the second Light is] [Oraiael [...]-udas[...]]os, Ap[...] 128 Arros[...]. The third (aeon) of the third Light (is) Daveithe-Laraneus- Epiphanios-Eideos. The fourth (aeon) as the fourth Light (is) Eleleth-Kodere- Epiphanios-Allogenios. But as for all the rest who are in matter, they were all left (there). It was because of knowledge of greatness, audacity and power that they came into existence and comforted themselves. Because they did not know God, they shall pass away. Behold, Zostrianos, you have heard all these things of the gods are ignorant and (which) seem infinite to angels."

I took courage and said, "I am wondering about the Triple Powerful Invisible Perfect Spirit: how he exists for himself, [how he causes] everything who really exist what is the [...] [... and [...] [...] of [...] 129 very [...] they set [me] down (and) left.

Apophantes and Aphropais, the Virgin-light, came before me and brought me into Protophanes, (the) great male perfect Mind. I saw all of them as they exist in one. I joined with them all (and) blessed the Kalyptos aeon, the virgin Barbelo and the Invisible Spirit. I became all-perfect and received power. I was written in glory and sealed. I received there a perfect crown. I came forth to the perfect individuals, and all of them were questioning me. They were listening to the loftiness of my knowledge. They were rejoicing and receiv-
ing power. When I again came down to the aeons of Autogenes, I received a true image, pure (yet) suitable for the perceptible (world).

I came down to the aeon copies and came down here to the airy-earth. I wrote three tablets (and) left them as knowledge for those who would come after me, the living elect. Then I came down to the perceptible world and put on my image. Because it was ignorant, I strengthened it (and) went about preaching the truth to everyone. Neither the angelic beings of the world nor the archons saw me, for I negated a multitude of judgments which brought me near death.

But an erring multitude awakened saying, "Know those who are alive and the holy seed of Seth. Do not disobedience to me. [Awaken] your divine part to God, and as for your sinless elect soul, strengthen it. Behold death here and seek the immutable ingenerateness, the [Father] of everything. He invites you, while they reprove you. Although they ill-treat you, he will not abandon you.

Do not baptize yourselves with death nor entrust yourselves to those who are inferior to you instead of to those who are better. Flee from the madness and the bondage of femaleness and choose for yourselves the salvation of maleness. You have not come to suffer; rather, you have come to escape your bondage.

Release yourselves, and that which has bound you will be dissolved. Save yourselves so that your soul may be saved. The kind Father has sent you the Savior and given you strength. Why are you hesitating? Seek when you are sought; when you are invited, listen, for time is short.

Do not be led astray. The aeon of the aeons of the living ones is great, yet (so also is) the [punishment] of those who are unconvinced. Many bonds and chastisers surround you. Flee quickly before death reaches you. Look at the Light. Flee the Darkness. Do not be led astray to your destruction.

Zostrianos
Oracles of Truth of Zostrianos
God of Truth
Teachings of Zoroaster
THE LETTER OF PETER TO PHILIP (VIII,2)

Introduced by

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The Letter of Peter to Philip fills most of the concluding nine pages of Codex VIII. Situated immediately after the tractate Zostrianos, The Letter of Peter to Philip opens with a superscribed title (132,10-11) derived from the letter which forms the first part of the tractate. Like several other tractates in the Nag Hammadi library (Ap. Jas., Treat. Res., Eugnostos), The Letter of Peter to Philip is presented, in part, as a letter. Besides these letters in the Nag Hammadi library, other letters were also in use among the Gnostics (for example, Ptolemy's Letter to Flora, and letters of Valentinus, Monoimus the Arabian, and perhaps Marcion). Furthermore, just as a magnificent epistolary tradition developed around Paul and the Pauline school, so also a more modest collection of letters came to be ascribed to Peter. These Petrine or pseudo-Petrine letters include, in addition to The Letter of Peter to Philip, the catholic letters of Peter in the New Testament, the Epistula Petri ("Epistle of Peter") at the opening of the Pseudo-Clementines, and perhaps another letter of Peter known only from a brief quotation in Optatus of Milevis. Of these letters the pseudo-Clementine Epistula Petri is of special interest, since it shares a number of features with The Letter of Peter to Philip. Not only is it prefixed to a collection of materials relating to Peter; it also seeks to attest the authority of Peter, and as it concludes, the Contestatio begins by referring to the recipient - James the Just - reading and responding to the letter in a manner like that of Philip in the Letter of Peter to Philip 133,8-11. The Letter of Peter to Philip, however, is not to be identified with any of these letters attributed to Peter and must represent a newly discovered work in the Petrine corpus.

In its present form The Letter of Peter to Philip is clearly a Christian Gnostic tractate. Taken as a whole, the tractate is to be seen as a part of the Petrine tradition: Peter is the leader, the spokesman, the preacher among the apostles, and he may very well be described as having his own disciples (139,10). The only other apostle mentioned by name is Philip, who is submissive to the authority of Peter and whose place in the tractate seems intended to highlight the pre-eminent authority of Peter. With their leader, Peter, the apostles gather at Olivet and are taught by the risen Savior; upon returning to Jerusalem, they teach in the temple and perform healings; and eventually they go forth to preach, filled with holy spirit. In other words, not only the place of Peter but also the scenario of the narrative would suggest that The Letter of Peter to Philip shares important features with part of the first (Petrine) section of the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 1-12).
That the author of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* makes use of Christian traditions cannot be doubted. In particular, numerous parallels between this tractate and the first half of the Acts may be noted, including scenes, themes, and terms which are similar to these two documents. Even the genre of literature they represent—a narrative on Peter and the apostles within which are included revelatory, liturgical, and edificatory materials—is similar, although in the case of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* the narrative has been prefixed with a letter of Peter. Furthermore, the author of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* is familiar with other Christian traditions besides Lukan materials. The Savior's second revelatory answer (136,16-137,4) resembles the Johannine Logos hymn (Jn 1:1-18), but the similarities must not be overdrawn. Again, the traditional kerygmatic formulae in the credo of the sermon (139,15-21) show affinities with similar formulae to be found throughout early Christian literature (the parallels in John 19 are particularly close to the credo in *The Letter of Peter to Philip*), and the little "Pentecost" of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* (140,1[?]13) shares features with the Johannine "Pentecost" account (20:19-23). Moreover, the author of this tractate also mentions previous revelatory utterances of the Savior (135,5-6; 138,2-3, 22-24; 139,11-12), utterances frequently said to have been given while Jesus was embodied. Presumably these revelations of the embodied Savior could refer to such teachings as are presented in the canonical gospels, and the "four words" of 140,25 could have been understood as the four gospels to be sent to the four directions. (Hans-Gebhard Bethge suggests that originally the text of 140,25 may have read "the four directions," which eventually could have been modified to read "four words.") Hence, it is clear that the author of *The Letter of Peter to Philip* is conversant with early Christian materials and desires to establish continuity with these earlier traditions.

Gnostic emphases are clearly visible in the narrative framework of *The Letter of Peter to Philip*. In particular this observation applies to the gnostic "dialogue," the revelatory discourse of the Savior uttered in answer to the questions of the apostles. The first four revelatory answers (135,8-137,13) are at most marginally Christian, though they have been taken over and legitimated as revelations of the risen Lord. The first answer (135,8-136,15), which provides an abbreviated version of the myth of the mother, illustrates no overtly Christian features at all. It reflects a rather simple version of the myth, and is similar to the Sophia myth of *The Apocryphon of John* and the Barbelognostics of Irenaeus (*Haer.* 1.29.1-4) in terminology and general presentation. This set of four revelatory answers furnishes a gnostic perspective on the fall into deficiency and the attainment of fullness, and the imprisonment and the struggle of Gnostics in the world. To this set of answers has been appended an additional question and answer (137,13-138,3) which utilizes different terms and focuses upon the life and mission of the apostles. Gnostic in perspective like the other answers, this additional answer does show Christian concerns, and illustrates a dominant interest of *The Letter of Peter to Philip*, the suffering of the believer.

In addition to the questions and answers in the gnostic dialogue, other materials similarly used in the tractate may also show gnostic proclivities. The two prayers of the gathered apostles (133,17-134,9) contain traditional terms and themes commonly found in early Christian prayers, but also proclaim a luminosity and glory which make them especially appropriate as the prayers of Gnostic
Christians. Likewise, the description of the resurrected Christ as a light and a voice (134,9-14; 135,3-4; 137,17-19; 138,11-13,21-22) represents a primitive way of depicting the appearances of the risen Lord (Mk 9:2-8 par.; 2 P 1:16-19; Ac 9:1-9; 22:4-11; 26:9-18; 1 Co 15; Rv 1:12-16), but among Gnostic Christians such theophanic descriptions were particularly appreciated.

In the brief sermon of Peter (139,9-140,1 [?] ) gnostic tendencies are even more clearly seen. To be sure, a traditional Christian credo constitutes the first part of the sermon (139,15-21), and traditional terms are applied to Jesus ("the Lord Jesus," "the Son," "the author of our life"), but the credo is interpreted according to the Gnostic Christian theology of the author of The Letter of Peter to Philip. From the time of his incarnation Jesus suffered, but he suffered as one who is "a stranger to this suffering" (139,21-22). A Christological tension remains as the sermon stresses both the reality of Jesus' sufferings and the glory of his divinity. In contrast to the suffering illuminator Jesus, the sermon continues, the followers of Jesus suffer because of "the transgression of the mother" (139,23). This phrase is reminiscent of references to the fall of mother Eve, and refers, for the Gnostic Christian author, to the mother often named Sophia in other versions of the myth. She is also called "the mother" at 135,12, and her tragic fall is seen as the source of human sufferings. Hence, this reference to "the transgression of the mother" may provide another point of contact between the figures of Eve and Sophia in gnostic literature.

It is possible, then, to suggest a general outline for the literary history of The Letter of Peter to Philip. On the basis of the parallels with The Apocryphon of John and Irenaeus, we suggest that The Letter of Peter to Philip was written around the end of the second century C.E. or into the third. The author of the text presumably wrote in Greek: such may be intimated by the presence of Greek loan words and Greek idioms. The author apparently was a Christian Gnostic who was well versed in the Christian tradition, and who used and interpreted that tradition in a Christian Gnostic fashion. A gnostic dialogue has been constructed, though it is less a true dialogue than a revelatory discourse of Christ in answer to questions raised by the apostles. Within this dialogue are included gnostic materials which are non-Christian or only marginally Christian; these materials have been adopted as revelatory disclosures of the risen Christ. On the basis of the Christian and gnostic traditions with which the author was familiar, the author compiled a narrative document with a revelatory focus. The letter itself was added at the beginning of this narrative in order to stress the authoritative place of Peter, and The Letter of Peter to Philip subsequently received its present title. Finally, the Greek tractate was translated into Coptic, and found its way into Codex VIII of the Nag Hammadi library.

According to the reports of James M. Robinson and Stephen Emmel, another Coptic text of The Letter of Peter to Philip is to be found in a papyrus codex which, at the present time, is neither published nor available for study.
The letter of Peter Which He
Sent to Philip

"Peter the apostle of Jesus Christ, to Philip our beloved brother and our fellow apostle and (to) the brethren who are with you: greetings! Now I want you to know, our brother [that] we received orders from our Lord and the Savior of the whole world that [we] should come [together] to give instruction and preach in the salvation which was promised us by our Lord Jesus Christ. But as for you, you were separate from us, and you did not desire us to come together and to know how we should organize ourselves in order that we might tell the good news. Therefore would it be agreeable to you, our brother, to come according to the orders of our God Jesus?"

When Philip had received these, and when he had read them, he went to Peter rejoicing with gladness. Then Peter gathered the others also. They went upon the mountain which is called "the (mount) olives," the place where they used to gather with the blessed Christ when he was in the body.

Then, when the apostles had come together, and had thrown themselves upon their knees, they prayed thus saying, "Father, Father, Father of the light, who possesses the incorruptions, hear us just as thou hast [taken pleasure] in thy holy child Jesus Christ. For he became for us an illuminator in the darkness. Yea hear us."

And they prayed again another time saying, "Son of life, Son of immortality who is in the light, Son, Christ of immortality, our Redeemer, give us power, for they seek to kill us."

Then a great light appeared so that the mountain shone from the sight of him who had appeared. And a voice called out to them saying, "Listen to my words that I may speak to you. Why are you asking me? I am Jesus Christ who am with you forever."

Then the apostles answered and said, "Lord, we would like to know the deficiency of the aeons and their pleroma." And: "How are we detained in this dwelling place?" Further: "How did we come to this place?" And: "In what manner shall we depart?" Again: "How do we have [the] authority of boldness?" [And]: "Why do the powers fight against us?"
Then a voice came to them out of the light saying, "$\text{It is you yourselves who are witnesses that I spoke all these things to you.}$ $\text{But because of your unbelief I shall speak again. First of all concerning [the deficiency] of the aeons, this is the deficiency, when the disobedience and the foolishness of the mother appeared without the commandment of the majesty of the Father. She wanted to raise up aeons. And when she spoke, the Arrogant One followed. And when she left behind a part, the Arrogant One laid hold of it, and it became a deficiency. This is the deficiency of the aeons. Now when the Arrogant One had taken a part, he sowed it. And he placed powers over it and authorities. And [he] enclosed it in the aeons which are dead. And all the powers of the world rejoiced that they had been begotten. But they do not know the pre-existent [Father], since they are strangers to him. But this is the one to whom they gave power and whom they served by praising him. But he, the Arrogant One, became proud on account of the praise of the powers. He became an envier and he wanted to make an image in the place of an image and a form in the place of a form. And he commissioned the powers within his authority to mold mortal bodies. And they came to be from a misrepresentation, from the semblance which had emerged.}$

$\text{Next concerning the pleroma: I am the one who was sent down in the body because of the seed which had fallen away. And I came down into their mortal mold. But they did not recognize me; they were thinking of me that I was a mortal man. And I spoke with him who belongs to me, and he harkened to me just as you too who harkened today. And I gave him authority in order that he might enter into the inheritance of his fatherhood. And I took they were filled in his salvation. And since he was a deficiency, for this reason he became a pleroma.}$

$\text{It is because of this that you are being detained, because you belong to me. When you strip off from yourselves what is corrupted, then you will become illuminators in the midst of mortal men.}$

$\text{And this (is the reason) that you will fight against the powers, because [they] do not have rest like you, since they do not wish that you be saved.} "$\text{

Then the apostles worshipped again saying, "$\text{Lord, tell us: In what way shall we fight against the archons, since [the] archons are above us?} "$\text{

Then [a] voice called out to them from the appearance saying,}$

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"Now you will fight against them in this way, for the archons are fighting against the inner man. And you are to fight against them in this way: Come together and teach in the world the salvation with a promise. And you, gird yourselves with the power of my Father, and let your prayer be known. And he, the Father, will help you as he has helped you by sending me. 138 Be not afraid, [I am with you forever,] as I previously [said to] you when I was in the body." Then there came lighting and thunder from heaven, and what appeared to them in that place was taken up to heaven.

Then the apostles gave thanks to the Lord with every blessing. And they returned to Jerusalem. And while coming up they spoke with each other on the road concerning the light which had come. And a remark was made concerning the Lord. It was said, "If he, our Lord, suffered, then how much (must) we (suffer)?"

Peter answered saying, "He suffered on [our] behalf, and it is necessary for us too to suffer because of our smallness." Then a voice came to them saying, "I have told you many times: It is necessary for you to suffer. It is necessary that they bring you to synagogues and governors, so that you will suffer. But he who does not suffer and does not..." 139 [...] [...] the Father [...] in order that he may [...]"

And the apostles rejoiced greatly and came up to Jerusalem. And they came up to the temple and gave instruction in salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they healed a multitude.

And Peter opened his mouth, he said to his (fellow) disciples, "[Did] our Lord Jesus, when he was in the body, show us everything? For he came down. My brothers, listen to my voice." And he was filled with a holy spirit. He spoke thus: "Our illuminator, Jesus, came down and was crucified. And he bore a crown of thorns. And he put on a purple garment. And he was [crucified] on a tree and he was buried in a tomb. And he rose from the dead. My brothers, Jesus is a stranger to this suffering. But we are the ones who have suffered through the transgression of the mother. And because of this, he did everything like us. For the Lord Jesus, the Son of the immeasurable glory of the Father, he is the author of our life. My brothers, let us therefore not obey these lawless ones and walk in [...] Then Peter [gathered together the others also] saying, ["O, Lord Jesus] Christ, author [of our] rest, give us a spirit of understanding in order that we also may perform wonders."

Then Peter and the other apostles saw [him] and they were filled
with a holy spirit. And each one performed healings. And they parted in order to preach the Lord Jesus. And they came together and greeted each other saying, "Amen."

Then Jesus appeared saying to them, "Peace to you [all] and everyone who believes in my name. And when you depart, joy be to you and grace and power. And be not afraid; behold, I am with you forever."

Then the apostles parted from each other into four words in order to preach. And they went by a power of Jesus, in peace.
This tractate is the only writing of the Nag Hammadi corpus that features, or even names, the mysterious "priest of God Most High" encountered by the patriarch Abraham, according to Genesis 14:18 (cf. Ps 110:4). Its title is partially preserved on one of the fragments making up page 1 of Codex IX. Unfortunately, this codex is in a rather bad state of preservation. Only 19 lines of text (out of approximately 745) from the tractate Melchizedek are completely preserved, and less than 50 percent of the total text is recoverable even by means of conjectural restoration. Thus, since there is no other extant copy of this tractate, only a very imperfect picture of its content is possible to attain, and what has been preserved is susceptible to more than one interpretation. The following account must be read with these caveats in mind.

In terms of literary genre, this tractate is an apocalypse, specifically an "apocalypse of Melchizedek." It contains revelations putatively given by heavenly intermediaries to Melchizedek, who communicates the revelations to a privileged few. Readers are implicitly invited to see themselves as sharing in these special revelations, as members of these privileged few.

The tractate consists of three main parts:

I. 1,1(?)–14,5: The tractate apparently opens with a brief vocative address by Melchizedek to Jesus Christ, but there quickly follows a third revelation addressed to Melchizedek by a heavenly informant whose name has been restored as "Gamaliel" (5,18). An important feature of this revelation, addressed to the "priest of God Most High" (12,10-11; cf. Gn 14:18), is a prophecy of the ministry, death, and resurrection of the Savior, Jesus Christ. It also contains a remarkable passage which predicts the coming of (docetic) heretics who will deny the physical reality of Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection (5,1-11). Melchizedek himself plays a role in this revelation, for a future high-priestly office is prophesied for him (esp. 5,11-17). A prophecy of the final triumph over death concludes this first revelation (14,8-9).

II. 14,15-18,11 (?): Melchizedek then arises with joy, and undertakes several ritual actions which may also provide for us some insights into the cultic life of the community for which the writing as a whole is intended: prayers of thanksgiving, baptism, reception of the priestly name, and a presentation of spiritual offerings. This liturgical section also includes a lengthy set of invocations, each beginning "Holy are you," addressed to members of the heavenly world (16,16-18,7; cf. 5,27-6,10). What is of special interest here is that most of the
names of these divine beings are names that appear in such gnostic texts as *The Apocryphon of John* and other tractates associated with Sethian Gnosticism. These names include Barbelo, Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveithe, Eleleth, and others.

III. 18,11(?)–27,10: A second set of revelations transports Melchizedek into the future, again centering on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But this time — if our reconstruction of the fragmentary text is correct — Melchizedek is given to understand that the spiritual triumph of Christ over his enemies will be that of Melchizedek himself!

Our tractate thus presents a number of challenging features of special interest to the historian of religions; it is indeed a mélange of traditions of Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic stamp. Its presentation of the figure of Melchizedek is a case in point: he is not only the ancient "priest of God Most High" known to us from the Bible, but he also returns as an eschatological "high-priest" and "holy warrior." Such Jewish apocalyptic material as the Melchizedek fragments from Qumran (11QMelch) and 2 (Slavonic) *Enoch* shed considerable light on these features.

In this tractate, Melchizedek’s appearance in the endtime is tied to the career of Jesus Christ: his incarnation, death, and resurrection. In other words, Jesus Christ *is* Melchizedek! Such an idea can be understood as rooted in an interpretation of Hebrews 7:3. Moreover, the idea that Melchizedek is the "Son of God" (i.e., identical to Jesus Christ) gained currency in some early Christian circles, particularly in Egypt.

Can anything be determined about the religious community for which our tractate was composed? The fourth-century bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, St. Epiphanius, gives us an account of a Christian sect whose members referred to themselves as "Melchizedekians" (*Haer. 55*). A comparison of Epiphanius’ account with *Melchizedek* reveals enough features in common to suggest that the latter may have originated in a group of "Melchizedekians," features such as the glorification of the priesthood of Melchizedek and a Christology that insisted on the true humanity of Christ. (The Melchizedekians were not Gnostics.)

But what of the gnostic features clearly discernible in the text? These include the divine names from gnostic mythology already mentioned, a fragment of a theogonic myth (9,1-10), a gnostic interpretation of the paradise story (9,28-10,11), and a reference to the "children of Seth" (5,20). One possible explanation of these features is that an earlier form of the text has undergone a process of gnostic editing: the latest redactor was a Gnostic who identified Melchizedek-Christ with the gnostic savior Seth and who interpolated into the text the various gnostic features that are now found in it. The final form of *Melchizedek* is thus a product of Sethian Gnosticism. Other explanations are, of course, possible.

The tractate *Melchizedek* was written originally in Greek, probably in Egypt. A third-century date is likely, though it could be earlier (or later).
Melchizedek 1

Jesus Christ, the Son [of God 1 ...] from [...] \(^5\) the aeons that. I [might tell] 1 all of the aeons, and in (the case of) 1 each one of the aeons [that I might tell 1 the] nature of the aeon, what 1 it is, and that I might put on 1 friendship and goodness 1 as a garment, O brother [...] and [...] \(^{19}\) their end [...] 1. And he will [reveal 1 to them] the truth [...] in [...] \(^{25}\) proverb(s) [...] 2 at first] in parables 1 [and riddles ...] proclaim 5 them. Death will [tremble] 1 and be angry, not only 1 he himself, but also his [fellow] 1 world-ruling archons [and] 1 the principalities and the authorities, the 10 female gods and the male gods 1 together with the archangels. And [...] 16 all of them [...] the] world-rulers [...] 1 all of them, and all the [...] 1, and all the [...] 20.

They will say [...] concerning] 1 him, and concerning [...] 1 and [...] 25 they will [...] 1 hidden [mysteries ...] 3\(^3\) out of [...] the All. They will 5 [...] this the [lawyers] 1 will [bury] him quickly. 1 [They will] call him, 1 “impious man, lawless 1 [(and) impure].” And [on] the 10 [third] day he [will rise 1 from the] dead [...] 4\(^4\) holy disciples. And 1 the Savior [will reveal] to them [the world] 1 that gives life to the [All.] 1.

[But] those in the heavens spoke [many] 1 words, together with 1 those on the earth [and those] 10 under the earth. [...] 5

[Which] will happen in his name. 1 [Furthermore], they will say of him that he is 1 unbegotten though he has been begotten, (that) he does 1 not eat even though he eats, (that) he does not drink 5 even though he drinks, (that) he is uncircumcised 1 though he has been circumcised, (that) he is unfleshly 1 though he has come in flesh, (that) he did not 1 come to suffering 〈though〉 he came to suffering, 1 (that) he did not rise from the dead 10 〈though〉 he arose from [the] 1 dead.

[But] all the [tribes and] 1 all [the peoples] will speak [the truth], 1 who are receiving from [you] 1 yourself, O [Melchizedek], 15 Holy One, [High-Priest], 1 the perfect hope [and] 1 the [gifts of] life. [I am 1 Gamaliel] who was [sent] 1 to [...] the congregation of [the 20 children] of Seth, who are above 1 [thousands of] thousands and [myriads] 1 of myriads [of the] aeons [...] 1 essence of the [aeons 1 a] ba [...] aiai ababa. O 25 divine [...] of the [...] 1 nature ... 1 O Mother] of the aeons, [Barbelo, 1 O first-born] of the aeons, 6 splendid Doxomedon,
Dom[...]

O glorious one, Jesus Christ, O chief commanders of the luminaries, you [powers] Armozel, Oroiael, Daveithe, Eleleth, and you man-of-light, immortal Aeon Pigeradamas, and you good god of the beneficent worlds, Mirocheirothetou, through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is the one whom I proclaim, inasmuch as there has [visited the One who] truly exists [among those who] exist [... do(es)] not exist], Abel Baruch — that you (sg.) [might be given] the knowledge [of the truth] that he is [from the] race of the High-priest which is above [thousands of thousands] and [myriads] of myriads of the aeons. The 20 adverse [spirits are] ignorant of him and (of) their (own) destruction. Not only (that, but) I have come to [reveal] to you [the] truth [which is] within the [brethren.] He included himself [in the] living [offering] together with your [offspring.] He [offered] them up as an [offering to the] All. [For it is not] cattle [that] you will offer up [for sin(s)] of unbelief [and for] the ignor­ances [and all the] wicked [deeds] which they [will do ...]. And they do [not] reach [the] Father of the All [. . .] the faith [. . .] to receive [baptism ...] waters [. . .]. For [the waters] which are above [which] receive baptism [. . .]. But receive [that baptism which is] with the water which [. . .] while he is coming [. . .] baptism] as they [. . .] pray for the [offspring of the] 9 archons and [all] the angels, together with [the] seed (which) flowed [forth from the] Father] of the All [. . .] the entire [. . .] from [. . .] there were engendered the [gods and the angels] and the men [. . .] out of the [seed] all of [the] natures, those in [the heavens and] those upon the earth and [those] under [the earth ...] 25 nature of the females [. . .] among those that are in the [. . .] they were bound with [. . .] [But this] is [not] (the) true Adam nor (the) true Eve.

[For when they ate] of the tree [of knowledge] they trampled [the Cherubim] and the Seraphim [with the flaming sword]. They [. . .] which was Adam’s [the] world-rulers and [the] after they had brought forth [. . .] offspring of the archons and [their worldly things], these belonging to [. . .] 25 light [. . .]. And the females and the [males,] those who exist with [. . .] hidden] from every nature, [and they will] renounce] the archons [... 11 who] receive from him the [. . .]. For [they] are worthy of [. . .] immortal], and [great [. . .] and [great [. . .] and great [. . .] sons of [men ...] disciples [. . .] image] and [. . .] from the [light] which is holy.

For [. . .] from the [beginning] a seed [. . .]. But I will be silent [. . .] for we [are] the brethren who came down
from [the] living [...]. They will [....] upon the [....] of Adam [....] Abell, Enoch, [Noah ... 10 you], Melchizedek, [the Priest] [of God [Most High ...]] those who [....] women [....].

[....] 13 these two who have been chosen will [at] no time nor [in] any place will they be convicted, [....] whenever they have been begotten, [....] by their enemies, by their friends, [....] nor by strangers nor their [own] kin, (nor) by the [impious] nor the pious [All of] the adverse natures will [....] them, whether [....] that are manifest, or those that [are] not [manifest], together with those [that dwell] in the heavens and those that are [upon] the earth and those that are under 15 the earth. They will make [war ...] every one. [For [....] whether in the [....] 21 many [....].] And these in the [....] every [one] will [....]. These will [....] with every blow [....] weaknesses. These will be confined in other forms [and] will be punished. [These] the Savior will take them [away and] they will overcome everything, [not with] their mouths and words but by means of the [....] which will be done for [them. He will] destroy Death.

[These things] 10 which I was commanded [to reveal, these things reveal [as I (have done)].] But that which is hidden do not reveal [to] anyone, unless [it is revealed] 15 to you (to do so)."

And [immediately I] arose, [I, Melchizedek], and I began to [....] God [....] that I should [rejoice ...] 21 while he [is acting ...] living [... I said], "I [... 26 and I] will not cease, from [now on [for ever], O Father of the [All, because] you have had pity on me, and 15 [you have sent the] angel of light [....] from your [aeons ... to] reveal [....] when he came he [caused] me [to be raised up] from ignorance and (from) the fructification of death to life. For [....] I have a name, I am Melchizedek, the Priest 10 of [God] Most High; I [know] that it is I who am truly [the image of] the true High-Priest [of] God Most High, and [....] the world. For it 15 is not [a] small [thing that] God [....] with [....] while he [....]. And [.... the angels that] dwell upon the] earth [....] 22 is the [sacrifice] of [....] whom Death deceived. When he [died] he bound them 25 with the natures which are [leading them astray]. Yet he offered up 16 offerings [....] cattle [....] I gave them to [Death and the angels] and the [....] demons [....] living offering [....] I have offered up myself to you as an offering, together with those that are mine, to you yourself, (O) Father of the All, and 10 those whom you love, who have come forth from you who are holy (and) [living]. And (according to) I the [perfect] laws I shall pronounce my name as I receive baptism [now] (and) for ever, (as a name)
among the living (and) holy names, and (now) in the waters, Amen.

Holy are you, Holy are you, O Father of the All, who truly exist, for ever and ever, Amen. Holy are you, Mother of the aeons, Barbelo, for ever and ever, Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you, First-born of the aeons, Doxomedon. [for ever] and ever, Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you. [for ever and ever], Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you, [First] aeon, Harmozel, for ever and ever, [Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you, commander, luminary of the aeons, Oriael, for ever and ever, Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you, commander-in-chief Eleleth, the aeons for ever and ever], Amen. Holy are you, Holy are you, Holy are you, commander-in-chief of the All, Jesus Christ, for ever and ever, Amen.

[. . .]. Blessed confession. [And . . .] confess him . . . now . . . then it becomes . . . fear and . . . fear and . . . disturb . . . surrounding [them . . .] in the place [which has a] great darkness [in it and] many . . . appear . . . there [ . . . appear . . .] And . . . they were clothed with . . . all and . . . disturbances. They gave . . . their words . . . and they said to me, Melchizedek, Priest of God [Most High . . . they] spoke as though . . . their] mouths . . . in the All . . . lead astray . . . with his . . . worship [and . . .] faith [and . . .] his prayers, And . . . those that [are his . . .] first . . . They did not care that [the priesthood which you perform, which is from . . . in the] counsels of . . . Satan . . . the sacrifice . . . his doctrines . . . of this aeon . . . which exist(s) [in . . .] lead(s) [astray . . .] and some . . . he gave them to . . . and thirteen . . . throw [him . . . in order that] you might . . . for] immediately . . . by means of . . . on the ground]. The (p. 23 almost completely missing) which is above . . . 25 me. And . . . you (pl.) struck me, you threw me, corpse. And . . . [you crucified me] from the third hour [of the Sabbath-eve] until [the ninth hour]. And after [these things
I arose] from the dead. . . . I came out of my eyes saw they did not find anyone. . . . 26 greeted me. . . .
They said to me, "Be strong, O Melchizedek, great High-priest of God Most High, for the archons, who are your enemies, made war; you have prevailed over them, and they did not prevail over you, [and you] endured, and [you] destroyed your enemies of their will rest, in any which is living (and) holy those that exalted themselves against him in flesh.

[. . . 27 with] the offerings, working on that which is good, fasting with fasts.

These revelations do not reveal to anyone in the flesh, since they are incorporeal, unless it is revealed to you (to do so)."

When the brethren who belong to the generations of life had said these things, they were taken up to (the regions) above all the heavens. Amen.
THE THOUGHT OF NOREA (IX,2)

Introduced by
Birger A. Pearson

Translated by
Søren Giversen and Birger A. Pearson

Comprising only 52 lines of text, this tractate is one of the shortest of the Nag Hammadi corpus. The pages of the manuscript on which it is found are damaged, but they preserve enough text to allow for the restoration of almost the entire tractate. The Coptic text, however, is manifestly corrupt at points, and textual emendation has been deemed necessary here and there (indicated in the translation with pointed brackets).

The tractate bears no title in the manuscript. The one used in this edition is a phrase found in the text itself, at the end of the tractate (29,3). Another title is in use in German scholarship: “Ode on Norea,” a designation that also defines the literary genre of this writing: an ode or hymn.

The hymnic features evident in the text include parallelismus membrorum, repetition, and a balanced structure, characteristics of Semitic poetry. Norea does not, however, satisfy the requirements of Greek poetry, for no traditional Greek meter can be ascribed to the original Greek text of which this Coptic version is a translation.

The tractate has a clear fourfold structure:

I. 27,11-20: The tractate begins with an invocation addressed to a divine triad consisting of Father, Mother, and Son, the basic primal triad found in Sethian Gnosticism. The incomprehensible Father is a primal Mind, here also called Adamas (28,30; 27,26), whose Thought (ennoia) is a primal spiritual Mother. Their son is Mind (nous), also called Logos (27,18) and Autogenes (28,6).

II. 27,21-28,12: The invocation is expressly attributed to Norea: “It is Norea who [cries out] to them” (27,21-22). Her cry for deliverance results in her restoration to the divine world, her proper place (= the Pleroma), 27,23; 28,22).

III. 28,12-23: While remaining in the pleroma, Norea also has a saving role to play in propagating “words of Life” (28,13-14).

IV. 28,24-29,5: Norea’s own salvation is aided by the intercession of the “four holy helpers” (28,27-28), figures who are easily identifiable as the four “luminaries” of Sethian Gnosticism: Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveithe, and Eleleth (cf., e.g., Melch. IX 6,3-5). Her “thought” (29,3) is the gnosis that brings about for all of her spiritual progeny ultimate reintegration into the godhead. Thus, in saving others, Norea saves herself.

From what has already been said, there can be no doubt that Norea is a gnostic text in the full technical sense of that term. It has justifiably been included among those gnostic texts which are classified as Sethian, in the sense that they share es-
sential features of a discrete gnostic system conveniently labeled as Sethian. (Hans-Martin Schenke is the foremost proponent of this classification, which applies to the following texts of the Nag Hammadi corpus: Ap. John, Hyp. Arch., Gos. Eg., Apoc. Adam, Steles Seth, Zost., Norea, Marsanes, Allogen, and Trim. Prot.) The Sethian system includes the following essential elements: 1) the gnostic triad of Father, Mother, and Son; 2) the four "luminaries" subordinate to the Son; and 3) the figure of Seth and/or his feminine counterpart, Norea. All of these elements are found in our tractate.

There are no clear indications of Christian influence in this tractate, and such Jewish influence as can be found in it belongs to its prehistory, i.e., the earlier formulations of the Sethian system which is reflected in it.

The most interesting feature of Norea is the savior figure depicted in it, Norea. This figure occurs in a wide range of gnostic literature, Sethian and non-Sethian, with considerable variation in the spelling of her name: Norea, Orea, Noraia, Oraia, Horaia, Nora, Noria, Nuraita, and Nhuraita. She is represented in the literature as the daughter of Adam and Eve, sister-wife of Seth, or as the wife of Noah or Shem. She is sometimes portrayed as the intended victim of rape by the wicked archons, as in The Hypostasis of the Archons (II,4), a text which stands in close relationship with Norea. Comparative analysis of the gnostic texts, together with certain traditions from Jewish aggadah featuring a Cainite woman called Naamah (cf. Gn 4:22), shows that Norea is a gnostic derivative of the figure of Naamah. The original spelling of her name in Greek is Horaia, the semantic equivalent of Hebrew Na'amah ("pleasing, lovely").

Norea thus has a previous career in Jewish legend as a naughty girl, Naamah, cavorting with the fallen "sons of God" (Gn 6:2). A completely opposite picture of Norea is presented in Hyp. Arch., according to which she is an undefiled virgin and a spiritual helper to (gnostic) humankind (II 91,34-92,2; cf. Gn 2:18). It is this picture of Norea that is reflected in our tractate as well. Indeed, in Norea, the saving role of Seth has disappeared completely; it is Norea who is the gnostic "saved savior." As such she can be regarded as a symbolic equivalent of Sophia ("wisdom") as well as a symbol of the gnostic soul in need of redemption and reintegration into the godhead.

It is not possible to come to any definite conclusion as to the tractate's provenance, but Syria or Egypt are the most likely possibilities. A date in the late second, or early third, century is plausible. We have no information on the question of its authorship, but Norea is one of the Nag Hammadi tractates that could easily have been written by a gnostic woman.

THE THOUGHT OF NOREA

IX 27, 11-29, 5

It is Norea who [cries out] to them. They [heard], (and) they received her into her place forever. They gave it to her in the Father of Nous, Adamas, as well as the voice of the Holy Ones, in order that she might rest in the ineffable Epinoia, in order that she might inherit the first mind which she had received, and that she might rest in the divine Autogenes, and that she (too) might generate herself, just as she also has inherited the [living] Logos, and that she might be joined to all of the Imperishable Ones, and [speak] with the mind of the Father.

And [she began] to speak with words of Life, and she remained in the presence of the Exalted One, possessing that which she had received before the world came into being. [She has] the [great mind] of the Invisible One, [and she gives] glory to her Father, [and she] dwells within those who [...] within the Pleroma, [and] she beholds the Pleroma.

There will be days when she will behold the Pleroma, and she will not be in deficiency, for she has the four holy helpers who intercede on her behalf with the Father of the All, Adamas. He it is who is within all of the Adams, possessing the thought of Norea who speaks concerning the two names which create a single name.
THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH (IX,3)

Introduced by
BIRGER A. PEARSON

Translated by
SØREN GIVersen and BIRGER A. PEARSON

This tractate is unfortunately poorly preserved, owing to the fragmentary condition of the manuscript. Almost half of the text is lost. Even so, enough material is extant or recoverable to enable us to gain a rather good picture of the tractate's content.

It is possible that a title was originally appended to the tractate at the end (as is the case with 21 of the other tractates in the Nag Hammadi corpus); if so, it would have been part of the last inscribed folio of the codex, which is now lost (pp. 75-76). The title now in universal use has been editorially assigned on the basis of content ("word of truth," 31,8; "true testimony," 45,1), and underscores the author's concern to establish "true" faith and praxis while also exposing the false claims of "heretical" opponents.

Indeed, one of the most interesting features of this tractate is that we see in it the other side of the theological arguments we know so well from the ecclesiastical heresiologists. The author is a Christian Gnostic polemicist, with a strict en-cratic world view and lifestyle. His chief opponents are catholic Christians of the ecclesiastical establishment. Surprisingly, our gnostic author does not spare fellow Gnostics similar polemical treatment, i.e., Gnostics whose lifestyle and ritual practice differ from his own.

The tractate consists of two main parts. The first is a well-constructed homily on truth versus falsehood, addressed to fellow members of a Christian Gnostic community (29,6-45,6). Its purpose is to bolster the convictions of the author’s fellow Gnostics and to warn them against the errors of (catholic) Christian opponents. The second part (45,6-end) consists of miscellaneous additions, including elaborations of themes already sounded in the homily itself. It is in this section that the polemics against other Gnostics occur.

I. The homily opens with an exordium in which the author appeals to those endowed with spiritual hearing. An attack is then launched against the Law, which for the author is summed up in the command to procreate. The polemics continue with attacks on those who espouse martyrdom in the belief that there will be a "carnal resurrection" (31,22-38,27). Sexual "defilement" (39,5), i.e., marriage and procreation, is vigorously criticized (38,27-41,4), with Jesus' virgin birth used as a sign that Christians should lead a virginal life (40,5-7). The capstone of the homily as a description of the career of the archetypical Gnostic: his renunciation of the world and his reintegration into the realm of imperishability (41,4-44,30). A peroration sums up the "true testimony": self-knowledge is knowledge of God and leads to the "crown unfading" (44,30-45,6).
II. The appended miscellanea occur in a portion of Codex IX which has sustained considerable damage and loss. It is nevertheless clear that the polemical tone sounded in the homily consists of a gnostic midrash on the serpent of Genesis 3 (45,23-49,10). It retells the paradise story in such a way as to portray the serpent as the revealer of life and knowledge, and God (the Creator) as a malevolent and ignorant demon. This material is probably based on a previously existing source, to which the author of Testim. Truth has added some editorial touches, including an allegorical interpretation of the serpent as a symbol of Christ (49,7).

Another interesting section, unfortunately very fragmentary, consists of polemics against the tenets of such other Gnostics as Valentinus (56,2-5), Basilides and his son Isidore (57,6-8), and the Simonians (58,2-3). It is presumably on the basis of their ethical and ritual practices that those teachers and groups are regarded by the author of Testim. Truth as heretics. For example, the Valentinians are criticized for their use of the sacrament of baptism (55,7-9); water baptism is consistently condemned in Testim. Truth (69,7-24; cf. 30,18-30). The Simonians are criticized for marrying and begetting children (58,2-4), a criticism that would extend to the Valentinians and Basilidians as well.

In short, from beginning to end, our tractate is filled with the polemics of a teacher who earnestly believed that his version of Christian faith and praxis was the only true one, a pamphleteer whose hatred of "heresy" was the match of that of an Irenaeus, a Hippolytus, or a Tertullian. Indeed, our author can be regarded as a mirror-image of the great heresiologists of the Church, representing the other side of the argument.

Who was this man? From what can be gathered from the tractate itself, he was probably an Alexandrian whose Gnostic Christianity was heavily influenced by other Alexandrian gnostic traditions, especially Valentinianism. Yet he rejected certain features of Valentinian doctrine and practice. As it happens, Clement of Alexandria has provided us with information about a gnostic teacher who fits the situation of our author very well: Julius Cassianus. This man had "departed from the school of Valentinus" (Strom. III.93) and espoused a strict encratism, condemning marriage and sexual intercourse. Julius Cassianus, of all the heretics known to us by name from ancient sources, is the most likely candidate for the authorship of Testim. Truth.

Even if Julius Cassianus is not its author, Testim. Truth is most plausibly to be situated in Alexandria and dated to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third.

THE TESTIMONY OF TRUTH

IX 29, 6-74, 30

I will speak to those who know 1 to hear not with the ears 1 of the body but with the ears 1 of the mind. For many have sought 10 after the truth and have not 1 been able to find it; because there has taken hold
of them [the] old leaven of the Pharisees and the scribes [of] the Law. And the leaven is [the] errant desire of the angels and the demons and the stars. As for the Pharisees and the scribes, it is they who belong to the archons who have authority [over them].

For no one who is under the Law will be able to look up to the truth for they will not be able to serve two masters. For the defilement of the Law is manifest; but undefilement belongs to the light. The Law commands (one) to take a husband (or) to take a wife, and to beget, to multiply like the sand of the sea. But passion which is a delight to them constrains the souls of those who are begotten in this place, those who defile and those who are defiled, in order that the Law might be fulfilled through them. And they show that they are assisting the world; and they [turn] away from the light, who are unable [to pass by] the archon of [darkness] until they pay the last [penny].

But the Son of Man [came] forth from Imperishability, [being] alien to defilement. He came [to the] world by the Jordan river, and immediately the Jordan [turned] back. And John bore witness to the descent of Jesus. For it is he who saw the [power] which came down upon the Jordan river; for he knew that the dominion of carnal procreation had come to an end. The Jordan river is the power of the body, that is, the senses of pleasures. The water of the Jordan is the desire for sexual intercourse. John is the archon of the womb.

And this is what the Son of Man reveals to us: It is fitting for you (pl.) to receive the word of truth. If one will receive it perfectly, . But as for one who is [in] ignorance, it is difficult for him to diminish his works of darkness which he has done. Those who have known Imperishability, [however], have been able to struggle against passions . . . I have said [to you], “Do not build [nor] gather for yourselves in the [place] where the brigands break open, but bring forth fruit to the Father.”

The foolish — thinking [in] their heart [that] if they confess, “We are Christians,” in word only (but) not with power, while giving themselves over to ignorance, to a human death, not knowing where they are going nor who Christ is, thinking that they will live, when they are (really) in error — Hasten towards the principalities and the authorities. They fall into their clutches because of the ignorance that is in them. For (if) only words which bear testimony were effecting salvation, the whole world would endure this thing [and] would be saved. [But it is in this way that they]
[drew] error to themselves. [.... 18 they do] not [know] that they [will destroy] 1 themselves. If the [Father 20 were to] desire a [human] sacrifice, 1 he would become [vainglorious]. 1

For the Son of 1 [Man] clothed himself with their 1 first-fruits; he went down to 25 Hades and performed many mighty works. 1 He raised the dead 1 therein; and the 1 world-rulers of darkness became envious 33 of him, for they did not find 1 sin in him. But 1 he also destroyed their works 1 from among men, so that 5 the lame, the blind, 1 the paralytic, the dumb, (and) the 1 demon-possessed were granted 1 healing. And he walked 1 upon the waters of the sea. 10 For this reason he [destroyed] 1 his flesh from [... 1 which he [...]. And he [became 1 ...] salvation [... 1 his death ... 19 everyone ...] 20 how many [they are! They are] 1 blind [guides, like the disciples]. 1 They boarded [the ship, (and) at about thirty] 1 stades, they [saw Jesus 1 walking] on the [sea. These] 25 are [empty] martyrs, 1 since they bear witness only [to] 1 themselves. And yet they are 1 sick, and they are not able to raise 34 themselves.

But when they are 1 "perfected" with a (martyr's) death, this 1 is the thought that they have 1 within them: "If we 5 deliver ourselves over to death 1 for the sake of the Name we will be saved." These matters 1 are not settled in this way. But 1 through the agency of the wandering 1 stars they say 10 that they have "completed" their [futile] 1 "course," and [... 1 say, [...]. 1 But these [...] 1 they have [delivered 15 themselves ...]. 23 But they resemble 1 [...] them. They do not have 25 the word which gives 1 [life].

[And] some say, 1 "On the last day 1 [we will] certainly arise 35 [in the] resurrection." But they do not 1 [know what] they are saying, 1 for the last day 1 [is when] those belonging to Christ 5 [... the] earth which 1 is [...]. when the [time] 1 was fulfilled, he destroyed 1 [their archon] of 1 [darkness ...] soul(s) [... 20 he 1 stood ...] 1 they asked [what they have been] 1 bound with, [and how they] 1 might properly [release themselves]. 25 And [they came to know] 1 themselves, [(as to) who they are], 1 or rather, where they are [now], 1 and what is the [place 36 in] which they will rest 1 from their senselessness, [arriving] 1 at knowledge. [These] 1 Christ will transfer to [the heights] 5 since they have [renounced] 1 foolishness, (and have) advanced 1 to knowledge. 1 And those who [have 1 knowledge ...] 21 the great 1 [... the resurrection 1 ... he has come to] know 1 [the Son of Man], that 25 [is, he has come to] know [himself. 1 This] is the perfect life, 1 [that] man know 1 [himself] by means of the All. 1

[Do not] expect, therefore, 30 [the] carnal resurrection, 37 which [is]
destruction, [and they are not stripped] of [it (the flesh) who] err in [expecting] a [resurrection] that is empty. [They do] not [know] the power [of God], nor do they [understand the interpretation] of the scriptures [on account of their] double-mindedness. [The mystery] which [the Son of Man spoke about . . .] in order that [. . .] destroy . . . man who [. . . book] which is written [. . .] for [they] have . . . blessed . . . within [them, and they] dwell before [God under the light yoke. Those who do not] have [the life-giving word] in their [heart will die]; and in [their] thought they have become manifest to [the Son] of Man, according to [the manner of their] activity and their [error . . .] of this sort. They [. . .] as he divides the and they [do not] understand [that the Son] of Man is coming from him.

But [when they have come] up to [. . .] sacrifice, they die [in a human way], and they [deliver] themselves [. . .] a death [. . .] those who [. . .] they are many [. . .] each [one . . .] pervert [. . .] gain [. . . their] mind. [Those who receive him] to themselves [with uprightness] and [power] and every knowledge are the ones whom he will transfer [to the] heights, unto [life] eternal.

[But] those who receive [him] to themselves with [ignorance], the pleasures which are defiled prevail over [them]. [It is those people who used to] say, "God created [members] for our use, for us to [grow in] defilement, in order that [we might] enjoy [ourselves]." And they cause [God to] participate with them [in] deeds of this sort; and they [are not] steadfast [upon] the earth. [Nor will they reach] heaven, [but . . .] place will [. . .] four [. . .] unquenchable [word . . .] upon [the Jordan river] when he came [to John at the time he was baptized]. The [Holy] Spirit came down upon him [as a] dove [. . .] accept for ourselves that [he] was born of a virgin [and] he took flesh; he [having] received power. [Were we also begotten from [a] virginal state [or] conceived by the word? [Rather, we have been born] again by [the word]. Let us therefore strengthen [ourselves] as virgins in the . . .]

The males dwell [ . . .] the virgin by means of [ . . .] in the word . . . But the word of [ . . .] and spirit [ . . .] is the Father [ . . .] for the man [ . . .] like Isaiah, who was sawed with a saw, (and) he became two. [So also the Son of Man divides] us by [the word of the] cross. It [divides the day from] the night and [the light from the] darkness and the corruptible [from] incorruptibility, and it [divides] the males from the females. But [Isaiah] is the type of the body. The
saw is the word of the Son of Man which separates us from the error of the angels.

No one knows the God of truth except solely the man who will forsake all of the things of the world, having renounced the whole place, (and) having grasped the fringe of his garment. He has set himself up as a [power]; he has subdued desire in every [way] within himself. He has and he has turned to him having also examined in becoming the mind. And [he . . . from] his soul there in what way the flesh which in what way out of it, and how many [powers does he have]? And who is the one who has bound him? And who is the one who will loose him? And what is the light? And what is the darkness? And who is the one who has created [the earth]? And who is God? [And who] are the angels? And what is soul? And what is spirit? And where is the voice? And who is the one who speaks? And who is the one who hears? Who is the one who gives pain? And who is the one who suffers? And who is it who has begotten the corruptible flesh? And what is the governance? And why are some lame, and some [blind], and some [ . . . ], and some rich, and some poor? And why are some powerless, some brigands? he having as he again fighting against [thoughts] of the archons and the powers and the demons, not giving them a place in which to rest. [But] he struggled against their passions he condemned their error. He cleansed his soul from the transgressions which he had committed with an alien hand. He stood up, being upright within himself, because he exists in everyone, and because he has death and life within himself, and he exists in the midst of both of them. And when he had received the power he turned towards the parts of the right, and he entered into the truth, having forsaken all things pertaining to the left, having been filled with wisdom, with counsel, with understanding and with insight, and an eternal power. [And] he broke open his bonds. [Those who had] formed the whole place [he] condemned. [But they did not] find hidden within him.

[And he gave command] to himself; he [began to] know [himself and] to speak with his [mind], which is the father of the truth, concerning the unbegotten aeons, and concerning the virgin who brought forth the light. And he thinks about the power which flowed over the [whole] place, and which takes hold of him. And he is a disciple of his mind which is male. He began to keep silent
within himself until the day when he should become worthy to be received above. He rejects for himself loquacity and disputations, and he endures the whole place; and he bears up under them, and he endures all of the evil things. And he is patient with every one; he makes himself equal to every one, and he also separates himself from them. And that which someone wants, he brings to him, in order that he might become perfect [(and) holy]. When the grasped him, having bound him upon and he was filled with wisdom. He bore witness to the truth the power, and he went into Imperishability, the place whence he [came] forth, having left the world which has the appearance of the [night, and] those that whirl the stars in it.

This, therefore, is the true testimony: When man comes to know himself and God who is over the truth, he will be saved, and he will crown himself with the crown unfading.

John was begotten by the World through a woman, Elizabeth; and Christ was begotten by the world through a virgin, Mary. What is (the meaning of) this mystery? John was begotten by means of a womb worn with age, but Christ passed through a virgin's womb. When she had conceived she gave birth to the Savior. Furthermore she was found to be a virgin again. Why, then, do you (pl.) err and not seek after these mysteries which were prefigured for our sake?

It is written in the Law concerning this, when God gave a command to Adam, "From every [tree] you may eat, [but] from the tree which is in the midst of Paradise do not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will surely die." But the serpent was wiser than all the animals that were in Paradise, and he persuaded Eve, saying, "On the day when you eat from the tree which is in the midst of Paradise the eyes of your mind will be opened." And Eve obeyed, and she stretched forth her hand; she took from the tree and ate; she also gave to her husband with her. And immediately they knew that they were naked, and they took some fig leaves (and) put them on as girdles.

But [God] came at the time of [evening] walking in the midst of Paradise. When Adam saw him he hid himself. And he said, "Adam, where are you?" He answered (and) said, "[I] have come under the fig tree." And at that very moment God [knew] that he had eaten from the tree of which he had commanded him, "Do not eat of it." And he said to him, "Who is it who has instructed you?" And Adam answered, "The woman whom you have given me." And
the woman said, "It is the serpent who instructed me." And he cursed the serpent, and called him "devil." And he said, "Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing evil and good." Then he said, "Let us cast him out of Paradise lest he take from the tree of life and eat and live for ever."

But of what sort is this God? First [he] maliciously refused Adam from eating of the tree of knowledge. And secondly he said, "Adam, where are you?" God does not have foreknowledge; (otherwise), would he not know from the beginning? And afterwards he said, "Let us cast him out of this place, lest he eat of the tree of life and live for ever." Surely he has shown himself to be a malicious grudger. And what kind of a God is this? For great is the blindness of those who read, and they did not know him. And he said, "I am the jealous God; I will bring the sins of the fathers upon the children until three (and) four generations." And he said, "I will make their heart thick, and I will cause their mind to become blind, that they might not know nor comprehend the things that are said."

But these things he has said to those who believe in him [and] serve him!

And [in one] place Moses writes, "[He] made the devil a serpent for those whom he has in his generation." Also in the book which is called "Exodus," it is written thus (cf. 7:8-12): "He contended against the [magicians], when the place was full of serpents according to their wickedness; and the rod which was in the hand of Moses became a serpent, (and) it swallowed the serpents of the magicians."

Again it is written (Nm 21:9), "He made a serpent of bronze (and) hung it upon a pole for the [one who will gaze] upon this bronze serpent, none will destroy him, and the one who will [believe in] this bronze serpent [will be saved]."

For this is Christ; those who believed in him [have received life]. Those who did not believe [will die].

What, then, is this faith? They do not [serve ... and you (pl.) ...] we [... 50 and] you [do not understand Christ spiritually when you say], "We [believe] in Christ." For [this] is the [way] Moses writes in every book. The [book of] the generation of Adam [is written for those] who are in the [generation] of [the Law]. They follow the Law [and] they obey it, [and ...] together with the [...]. (pp. 51-54 almost completely missing)

[... , "... 55 the] Ogdoad, which is the eighth, and that we might
receive [place] of salvation." [But they] know not what salvation is, but they enter into [misfortune] and into a [place] in death, in the [waters]. This is the baptism [of death which they observe] according to the Ogdoad, and his disciples resemble the disciples of Valentinus. They on their part, moreover, leave the good, but they have [worship of] the idols; he has spoken many words, and he has written many [books] they are manifest from [the] confusion in which they are, in [the] deceit of the world. For [they] go to that place together with their knowledge [which is] vain.

Isidore also, his son, resembled Basilides. He also [... many, and [he ...] but he did not [this ...] other disciple(s) [ ...] blind [ ...] but he] gave them [ ... pleasures ...] they do [not] agree [with] each other. For the [Simonians] take [wives] (and) beget children; but the [ ...] abstain from their [ ...] nature [ ...] a passion [ ...] the drops [of ...] anoint [them ...] which we [ ... they] agree] with [each other ...] him [ ...] they [ ...] judgment(s) these, on account of the [ ...] them [ ...] the heretics [ ...] schism(s) [ ...] and the males [ ...] are men [ ...] will belong [to the world-rulers] of darkness [ ...] of [the world ...] they have [ ... the [archons] ... power(s) ...] judge [them ...]. But [the ...] word(s) of [ ...] speak, while they [ ...] become [ ...] in a fire [unquenchable ...] they are punished.

[But these] who are [from the generation] of the Son of [Man have revealed] to the [ ... in] all of [the] affairs [...]. But [it is difficult] to [ ...] to find [one ...] and [two ...]. For the [Savior said to his] disciples, one in [ ... 61 and] he has [ ...] wisdom as well as [counsel and] understanding and [intelligence] and knowledge [and power] and truth. [And he has] some [ ...] from above [ ...] the place where [the Son of Man ...] power [ ...] guard against [ ...] he knows [ ...] understands [ ...] worthy of him [ ...] true [ ...] alien [ ...]. But [ ...], together with [ ...] evil, in [ ...] he received [baptism ...] and those that [ ...] (pp. 63-64 missing) in a dream [ ...] silver [ ...]. But [ ...] becomes [wealthy ...] among the [authorities ...]. But [the] sixthtieth [ ...] thus [ ...] word [ ...] they gold [ ...] they think, [ ...] we have been released from the flesh. [ ...] not turn him to [ ...] Jesus [ ...] the] beginning [ ...] a son [ ...] out of [ ...] the] pattern [ ...] light of ...] to find from [ ...] defilement which [ ...] they do not blaspheme
...67 them] not, neither is there any [pleasure] \(1\) nor desire, nor \(1\) [can they] control them. It is fitting \(1\) that they should become undefiled, \(5\) in order that they might \(1\) [show] to every [one] that they \(1\) [are from] the [generation of the] Son of Man, \(1\) since it is about [them] that the Savior bore \(1\) witness. \(1\)

But \(10\) [those who are] from the seed [of Adam] are manifest \(1\) by their [deeds which are] their [work]. \(1\) They have not ceased [from desire which is] \(1\) wicked \(\ldots\). \(1\) But some \(15\) [\ldots] the dogs \(1\) [\ldots] the angels \(1\) for [\ldots] which they beget \(1\) [\ldots] will come [\ldots] with their [\ldots] \(28\) move as they \(1\) [\ldots on] the day when they will beget \(30\) [children]. Not only that, but they \(1\) have intercourse while they are giving suck. \(68\)

But others are caught up in the death of [\ldots]. \(1\) They are [pulled] \(1\) [\ldots] which way, (and) they are gratified \(1\) by unrighteous Mammon.

\(5\) They lend money [at interest]; they [waste time]; \(1\) and they do not work. But he who is \(1\) [father] of [Mammon is (also)] \(1\) (the) father of sexual intercourse.

But he who \(1\) is able to renounce them shows [that] he is [from] the generation \(1\) of the [Son of Man], (and) has \(1\) power to accuse [them]. \(1\) he] \(1\) restrains [\ldots] \(15\) part(s) in a [\ldots] \(1\) in wickedness [and he makes] the \(1\) outer like the [inner. He resembles] an \(1\) angel which [\ldots] \(20\) power \(\ldots\) \(1\) said them. But the one [\ldots]. \(27\) And having withdrawn [\ldots] he became silent, having ceased from loquacity \(1\) and disputations. \(69\) But he [who has] found the [life-giving word \(1\) and he who] has come to know [the Father of Truth \(1\) has come to rest]; he has ceased [seeking], having \(1\) [found]. And when he found he became [silent]. \(5\)

But few are the things he used to say to those that \(1\) [\ldots] with their intellectual mind the [\ldots].\(1\)

There are some who, upon entering \(1\) the faith, receive a baptism \(1\) on the ground that they have [it] as a hope \(10\) of salvation, which they call \(1\) "the [seal,"] not [knowing] \(1\) that the [fathers of] the world are \(1\) manifest that [place. But] \(1\) he himself [knows that] he is sealed. \(15\) For [the Son] of [Man] \(1\) did not baptize any of his \(1\) disciples. But [\ldots] if those who \(1\) are baptized \(1\) were headed for life, \(1\) the world would become \(20\) empty. And the fathers of \(1\) baptism were defiled. \(1\)

But the baptism of truth is \(1\) something else; it is by renunciation of [the] \(1\) world that it is found. [But those who] \(25\) say [only] with the tongue [that \(1\) they] are renouncing it [are lying], \(1\) and they are coming to [the place] \(1\) of fear. Moreover they are humbled \(1\) within it. Just as those to whom it was given, \(30\) to have been condemned, \(1\) [they shall] get something!
They are wicked in their behavior! Some of them fall away to the worship of idols. [Others] have [demons] dwelling with them [as did] David the king. He is the one who laid the foundation of Jerusalem; and his son Solomon, whom he begat in [adultery], is the one who built Jerusalem by means of the demons, because he received [power]. When he [had finished building, he imprisoned] the demons [in the temple]. He [placed them] into seven [waterpots. They remained] a long [time in] the [waterpots], abandoned [there]. When the Romans went up to Jerusalem they discovered the waterpots, and immediately the [demons] ran out of the waterpots as those who escape from prison. And the waterpots [remained] pure (thereafter). [And] since those days, [they dwell] with men who are in ignorance, and [they have remained upon] the earth.

Who, then, is David? And who is Solomon? [And] what is the foundation? And what is the wall which surrounds Jerusalem? And who are the demons? And what are the waterpots? And who are the Romans? But these [are mysteries . . .] victorious over [ . . . the Son] of Man [ . . . undefiled . . .] and he [ . . .] when he [ . . .]. For [ . . .] is a great [ . . .] to this nature [ . . .] those that [ . . .] all in [a . . .] blessed and they [ . . . like a] salamander. [It] goes into the flaming fire which burns exceedingly; it slithers into the [furnace . . .] the] furnace [ . . .] the boundaries [ . . .] that they might see [ . . .] and the power [ . . .] sacrifice. Great is the sacrifice [ . . . but] in a [ . . .] aside [ . . .]. And [the Son] of Man [ . . .] and [he has become] manifest through the bubbling fountain of immortality. [ . . .] he is pure, [and he] is [ . . .]. A free man [is not] envious. He is set apart from everyone, from [every audacity and] envy the [power of] which is great [ . . .] is (a) disciple [ . . .] pattern of law [ . . .] these [ . . .] only [ . . .] they placed him under a[ . . .] a teaching [ . . .] his teaching, saying, "[Even if] an [angel] comes from heaven, and preaches to you beyond that which we preached to you, may he be anathema," (cf. Ga 1:8) not letting the [ . . .] of the soul which [ . . .] freedom [ . . .]. For they are still immature [ . . .] they are not able to [keep] this law which works by means of these heresies — though it is not they, but the powers of Sabaoth — by means of the [ . . .] the doctrines [ . . .] as they have been jealous of some [ . . . law(s)) in Christ. Those who will [ . . .] power [ . . .] they reach the [ . . .] the [twelve] judge [ . . .] them [ . . .] the fountain of [immortality . . .] in order that [ . . .] good [ . . .] the whole place. [ . . .] there the enemies. He baptized himself, and the he became divine; he flew
[up], (and) they did not grasp him. [...] there the [enemies [...] since it was not possible 25 [for them to bring him] down again. If every [...] grasps him [with] ignorance, attending to those who teach in the corners by means of carved things and artful tricks, they will not be able [...].
MARSANES (X,I)

Introduced and translated by

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Codex X is extant only in fragments representing considerably less than half of its original content. Codices X and XII are the two Nag Hammadi manuscripts which have suffered the most loss. But, unlike Codex XII, the fragments of Codex X represent literature that is previously unknown; that is to say, there does not exist any other extant copy of the tractate(s) contained in it. We do not even know how large Codex X originally was, for the 68 inscribed pages to which the extant fragments are assigned represent an absolute minimum; the original codex could very easily have consisted of over 90 inscribed pages.

We do not know for sure that Codex X contained only one tractate, though what can be determined of the content of the extant fragments suggests that this is the case. Letter-traces of a tractate title, with decorations, occur on a small fragment of the last inscribed page (68). The proper name "Marsanes" has been restored from these letter-traces; hence the title Marsanes.

Marsanes is the name of a gnostic prophet known from two other sources: the untitled tractate found in the Bruce Codex names Marsanes and Nikotheos as "perfect men" who had seen visions of a divine being called "the triple-powered one," an emanation of the supreme Father (Cod. Bruc. Untitled, ch. 7). Epiphanius of Salamis mentions among the prophets honored by the "Archontic" Gnostics "a certain Martiades and Marsianos, who had been snatched up into the heavens and had come down after three days" (Haer. 40.7.6). ("Marsianos" is simply a Greek variant of "Marsanes.") It is quite possible that the author of the Bruce Codex tractate had access to Marsanes, and our tractate may also have circulated among the "Archontics" discussed by Epiphanius.

In terms of genre, our tractate is an apocalypse, specifically an "apocalypse of Marsanes." "Marsanes" may be a name adopted by the gnostic author (mar means "master" in Syriac). Alternatively, an anonymous author is attributing his writing to a well-known gnostic prophet. In either case, the text contains purported revelations and reports of visionary experiences. There are also passages of a paraenetic character with which the author exhorts and encourages his readers. The text is addressed to members of a gnostic community who have already been initiated (see e.g., 2,19-21; 3,4-9).

The third-century Neoplatonist philosopher, Porphyry, in a biography of his great teacher, Plotinus, refers to certain "sectarians who had abandoned the ancient philosophy" (i.e. Platonism). These sectarians were Gnostics, with whom members of Plotinus' school had come in contact. Porphyry reports that these people "produced apocalypses of Zoroaster and Zostrianos and Nikotheos and Allogenes and Messos and others of this sort" (Vit. Plot. 16). Two of the apocalypses referred to by Porphyry are now available to us in Coptic versions in the Nag Hammadi corpus: Zostrianos (VIII,7) and Allogenes (XI,3). Marsanes, in terms of its content, is very closely related to these two tractates.
Too much of our tractate is now lost to allow us to give a full account of its content, or even to outline its structure. The first ten pages are relatively intact, however. This part of the tractate contains material relating to a gnostic ascent experience, and includes a discussion of the various levels of reality, symbolically referred to as "seals." These levels range from the "worldly" and "material," characterized by corporeal existence (2,16-21), to the realms of the invisible Three-Powered One, the Non-being Spirit, and the unknown Silent One (4,12-23).

The next-best preserved section is from the middle of the codex (pp. 24-42), and contains material on the mystical meaning of the letters of the alphabet and their relation both to the human soul and to the names of the gods and angels of the zodiacal realm and the other spheres of the heavens.

The material at the end of the codex is extremely fragmentary, but there are indications of visionary experiences and a reference to heavenly intermediaries who "spoke like the angels" (63,4). One of these is mentioned by name: Gamaliel (64,19), an angel who appears in a number of Sethian Gnostic sources, including Melchizedek (IX,1:5,18). This part of the tractate also includes references to a kind of baptismal ceremony (55,20; 66,1-5). The tractate ends with a word of encouragement to "those who will know [him]" (68,17, probably referring to the supreme Father; cf. 1,11-25).

Marsanes has been classified as a Sethian writing, on the basis of features in it which relate to the Sethian Gnostic system (as delineated especially by Hans-Martin Schenke). Seth is nowhere mentioned in the extant fragments, but the revelatory role assigned to Marsanes in this tractate makes it possible for us to see in him an avatar of Seth the savior.

There are no hints in our tractate of any Christian elements or influences, and such items of Jewish origin as are reflected must be assigned to its prehistory, i.e., to the Sethian Gnostic system lying behind the text.

Marsanes is one of the Sethian Gnostic tractates in the Nag Hammadi corpus that have been profoundly influenced by Platonist philosophy. The others are The Three Steles of Seth (VII,5), Zostrianos (VIII,1), and Allogenes (XI,3). In fact, both in terms of its metaphysics and its ritual references, Marsanes represents a kind of Platonism which coheres well with that of the Syrian Neoplatonist philosopher, Iamblichus of Chalcis (ca. 250-325 C.E.). For Marsanes, as for Iamblichus, matter is not evil; indeed, it is capable of salvation (see esp. 5,14-26). Here we see a definite attenuation of the radical dualism characteristic of earlier gnostic texts. For Marsanes, as for Iamblichus, the descent of the soul into matter is not regarded as a fall but as a demiurgic function, a doctrine based on Plato's discussion of the soul and its descent in the Timaeus (41a-42b). In Marsanes, the descent of a figure called "the Self-begotten One" (Autogenes) represents symbolically the descending soul in its demiurgic function (5,27-6,16). Similar ideas are expressed in Iamblichus' famous treatise, On the Mysteries of Egypt (De mysteriis VIII.3).

In terms of its ritual allusions, Marsanes is comparable to that variety of late Platonism in which theurgy was cultivated. Theurgy (theourgia: "the works [erga] of the gods [theoi]") is religious ritual whose chief aim is to assist the human soul in its reascent. The Chaldaean Oracles, a second-century collection
of revelatory poetry, is the classic authority for theurgy, but Iamblichus is probably the greatest exponent and theorist of theurgy among the philosophers. Study of his great work on religious ritual (De mysteriis, referred to above) opens up some interesting possibilities for understanding the enigmatic ritual allusions in Marsanes. One can thus view Marsanes as a text in which gnostic theurgy plays a crucial role.

Examples of Marsanes' preoccupation with ritual include the material on the "thirteen seals" (2,12-4,23), which is probably related to a gnostic ritual of ascent. (Cf. Steles Seth, which contains prayers and invocations used in such a ritual.) The material on the letters of the alphabet and the nomenclature of the gods and the angels (pp. 19-40) also is related to the ascent ritual, and probably involves ritual chant and special instructions expected to assist the soul in its ascent. An enigmatic reference to "wax images" and "emerald likenesses" (35,1-3) reminds us of Iamblichus' discussion of the use of stones, plants, etc., in theurgic ritual (De mysteriis V.23). Even the baptismal references already mentioned (55,20; 66,1-5) could be understood in association with an ascent ritual. (This is probably the case with the references to baptism in Zostrianos; see e.g., VIII 5,14-7,22.)

The tractate Marsanes was probably written sometime in the third century. There are strong indications of a Syrian background for its gnostic author, but this person could have been active in any number of places in the Mediterranean world, such as Rome or Egypt, though Syria is probably the best guess. From there the original Greek version would have been brought to Egypt and translated into Coptic.

MARSANES

X I, 1-68, 18

[. . .] 11 and a [reward]. They [came to know]; they 1 found him with a pure heart, 1 (and) they are not afflicted by him 1 with evils. Those who have received 15 you (pl.) will be given their 1 choice reward for 1 endurance, and he will 1 ward off [the] 1 evils from them. [But] let none 20 of us be distressed [and] 1 think [in] his 1 heart that the great 1 Father [. . .]. 1 For he looks upon the All [and] 25 takes care of them all. 1 And [he] has shown to them 1 his [. . .]. 1 Those that [. . .] 2 11 at first. 1

But as for the thirteenth 1 seal, I have established it, 1 together with [the] summit of 15 knowledge and the certainty 1 of rest. The first 1 [and the] second and the 1 [third] are the worldly 1 and the material. I have 20 informed you concerning these, that you should 1 [. . .] your bodies. And 1 [a] sense-perceptible [power] 1 will [. . .] those who will rest, 1 and they will be kept 25 [from] passion and division 1 [of the] union.

The fourth 1 [and the] fifth which are above, 1 [these] you have come
to know [... divine]. 3 He exists after the [...] and the nature of the [...] that is, the one who [...] three. And [I have informed] you of [...] in the three [...] by these two. I have informed you concerning [it, that it] is incorporeal [...] and after [...] within [...] every [...] which [...] your [...]. The [fifth, concerning the] conversion [of] those that are within me, and concerning those who dwell in that place.

But the sixth, concerning the self-begotten ones, 20 concerning the incorporeal being which exists partially, together with those who exist in the truth of the All [...] for understanding and assurance. And the [seventh], concerning the self-begotten power, which is the third [perfect ...] fourth, concerning salvation [and] wisdom. And the eighth, concerning the mind which is male, which appeared in the beginning, and (concerning) the being which is incorporeal and the [intelligible] world. The ninth, [...] of the power [which] appeared [in the beginning. The] tenth, [concerning Barbelo, the] virgin [...] of the Aeon. [The eleventh] and [the twelfth] speak of the Invisible One who possesses three powers and the Spirit which does not have being, belonging to the first Unbegotten (fem.). The thirteenth speaks concerning [the] Silent One who was not [known], and the primacy of [the one who] was not distinguished.

For I am he who has understood that which truly exists, whether partially or wholly, according to difference and same-ness, that they exist from the [beginning in the] entire place which is eternal, (i.e.) all those that have come into existence whether without being or with being, those who are unbegotten, and the divine aeons together with the angels, and the souls which are without guile, and the soul-garments, the likenesses of the simple ones. And afterwards they have been mixed with them. But still [... the] entire being [... which] imitates the [incorporeal being] and the unsubstantial (fem.). [Finally] 15 the entire defilement [was saved] together with the immortality of the former (fem.). I have deliberated and have attained to the boundary of the sense-perceptible world, I have come to know part by part the entire place of the incorporeal being, and [...] have come to know the intelligible world. I have come to know, when I was deliberating whether in every respect the sense-perceptible world is worthy of being saved entirely.

[For] I have not ceased speaking [of the] Self-begotten One, O [...] became [...] part by part the entire place. He descended; again he descended (from) the Unbegotten One who does not have
being, who is the Spirit. That one who exists before all of them reaches [to the divine] Self-engendered One. The one having [being] searches and he exists [and] he is like [and] from [dividing] I became for many, as it is manifest that he saved a multitude.

But after all of these things I am seeking the kingdom of the Three-Powered One, which has no beginning. Whence did he appear and act to fill the entire place with his power? And in what way did the unbegotten ones come into existence, since they were not begotten? And what are the differences among the [aeons]? And as for those who are unbegotten, how many [are they]? And in what respect [do they differ] from each other?

When I had inquired about these things I perceived that he had worked from silence. He exists from the beginning among those that truly exist, that belong to the One who exists. There is another, existing from the beginning, belonging to the One who works within the Silent One. And the silence him works. For as much as this one that one [works from] the [silence which belongs to the] Unbegotten One among [the aeons, and from] the beginning he does not have [being]. But the energy of that One is the Three-Powered One, the One unbegotten [before] the Aeon, not having [being]. And it is possible to behold the supremacy of the silence of the Silent One, i.e. the supremacy of the energy of the Three-Powered. And the One who exists, who is silent, [who is] above the [heaven . . .], revealed [the Three-Powered, First]-Perfect One.

When he . . . to the powers, they rejoiced. Those that are within me were perfected together with all the rest. And they all blessed the Three-Powered, one by one, who is [the] First-Perfect One, [blessing] him in purity, [everywhere] praising the Lord [who exists] before the All, [the] Three-Powered. [their worship] myself, [and I will still go on inquiring] how they had become silent. I will understand a power which I hold in honor.

The third power of the Three-Powered, when it (fem.) had perceived him, said to me, "Be silent in order that you might know; run, and come before me. But I know that this One was silent, and obtain understanding." For [the power] is attending [to me, leading] me into [the Aeon which is] Barbelo, [the] male [Virgin].

For this reason the Virgin became male, because she had been divided from the male. The Knowledge stood outside of him, because it belongs to him. And she who exists, she who sought, possesses (it),
just as the Three-Powered One possesses. She withdrew from them, from [these] two [powers], since she exists [outside of] the Great One, as she who is above who is silent, [who has] this [commandment] to be silent. His knowledge and his hypostasis and his activity are those things of which the power of the Three-Powered spoke, <saying>, We all have withdrawn to ourselves. We have become silent, [and] when we came to know [him, that is], the Three-Powered, [we] bowed down; we [...; we] blessed him upon us.’’ [...].

[... the] invisible [Spirit] ran up to his place. The whole place was revealed; the whole place unfolded he reached the upper region. Again he departed; he caused the place to be illuminated, and the whole place was illuminated. And [you] (pl.) have been given the third part of [the spirit] of the power of the One [who possesses] the three [powers]. Blessed is [...]. He said, “O [you who dwell in these] places, it is necessary [for you to know] those that are higher than these, and tell them to the powers. For you (sg.) will become [elect] with the elect ones [in the last] times, [as] the invisible Spirit [runs] up above. And you [yourselves], run with him up above, since you have [the] great crown which [...].

But on the day will beckon [run up above] [... and the sense-perceptible [... visible [... and they (pp. 11-12 missing) the perception. He is for ever, not having being, in the One who is, who is silent, the One who is from the beginning, [who] does [not] have being part of indivisible. The [... consider a [... ninth ...] I was dwelling] among the aeons which have been begotten. As I was permitted, [I] have come to be among those that were not [begotten]. But I was dwelling among the aeons which have been begotten. As I was permitted, [I] have come to be among those that were not [begotten]. But I was dwelling in the [great] Aeon, as I [...]. And [... the] three powers [the] One who possesses] the [three] powers. The [three powers ...] the Silent One and the Three-Powered One [... the] one that does not have breath. We took our stand in the [... we entered [... breath [... who] does not have breath, [and he] exists in a [... completely]. And I saw him to the great (fem.) [... they knew [him...] limit [... and [I ...] alone [... is active [... why, [again], (does) knowledge [... ignorant, and [... he runs the risk [... that he become [... on account of ...]. Those [...]. But it is necessary that a [... does not have form [... to this one
[... exists before 20 [...] the thought [...] the beginning [...] the one that [...] 18 these [...] look(ed) at [...] in nine [...] the] cosmic hebdomad [...] in a day of [...] 5 for ever [...] 14 and [...] after] many [years [...] 1 when I saw the [Father I came to] 1 know him, and [...] many [...] 1 partial [...] 20 for ever [...] 1 the material ones [...] 1 worldly [...] 1 partial [...] in addition [...] 19 13 he [...] 15 out of [...] 1 into those that [...] 1 them into [...] 1 name 1 [them. And] (as for) their nomenclature, 20 [bear] witness yourselves 1 [that you are] inferior to [their [...] and their [hypostasis].

But [in addition, when ...] 20 hidden [...] 1 the] third 1 [power]. The blessed Authority (fem.) 1 said [...] 1 among these and [...] 1 i.e. she who [does not have ...]. 20 For there is not glory [...] 1 nor even the one who [...]. 1 For indeed the one who [...]. 24 For [...] 21 14 and the [signs of the Zodiac [...] 1 and the [...] 1 and [...] 1 which do not have [...] 1 acquire for [...] 1 revolution [...] 20 But [the] soul(s) [...] 1 there [...] 1 body(s) of this [...] 1 soul(s) of heaven [...] 1 around [...] 25 shape [...] 1 which is [...] 22 15 those that [...] 1 there [...] 19 all the likenesses [...] 1 them [...] 1 all the forms [...] 1 shape(s), so that [they ... 1 and] become [...] 1 themselves [...] 25 and the [...] 1 the animals [...] 1 and the [...] (pp. 23-24 missing) 25 there.

But their 1 powers, which are the angels, 1 are in the form of 1 beasts and animals. 5 Some among them are 1 [polymorphous], and contrary to 1 [nature] they have 1 for their names which [...] 1. They are [divided] and [...] 10 according to the [...] 1 and ...] in [form ...]. 1 But these that are 1 [aspects] of sound according to the third 1 originate from being. 15 And concerning these, all of 1 these (remarks) are sufficient, 1 since we have (already) spoken about them.

For [this] 1 division takes place 1 again in these regions in [the manner] 20 we have mentioned from the [beginning]. 1 However the soul, on the 1 other hand, [has] 1 different shape(s). 1 The shape of the soul exists [in 25 this] form, 1 i.e. (the soul) that came into 1 existence of its own accord. The shape 1 is [the second] 26 spherical part 1 while the first allows [it], 1 eēiou, the self-begotten soul, 1 aeēiouō. 5 [The] second schema, 1 eēiou, ... by those [having] 1 two sounds (diphthongs), the first being 1 placed after them [...] 12 the light.

[Control] 1 yourselves, receive [the] 1 imperishable seed, 15 bear fruit, and 1 do not become 1 attached to your possessions.

But know that the oxytones 1 exist among the vowels 20 and the 1 diphthongs which are 1 next to them. But the [short] 1 are inferior, and the [...] 1 are [...] 25 by them. Those that [...] 1 since they are inter-
mediate [. . .]. The sounds of [the semivowels] are 27 superior to the voiceless (consonants). And those that are double are superior to the semivowels which do not change. But the aspirates are better than the inaspirates (of) the voiceless (consonants). And those that are intermediate will [accept] their combination in which they are; they are ignorant of the things that are good. They (the vowels) are combined with the intermediates which are less. [Form] by [form], \langle they constitute\rangle the nomenclature of the [gods] and the angels, [not] because they are mixed with each other according to every form, but only (because) they have a good function. It did not happen that \langle their \rangle will was revealed.

Do not keep on [sinning], and do not dare to make use of sin. But [I] am speaking to you (sg.) [concerning the three . . . shapes] of the soul. [The] third [shape of the soul] is [. . .] 28 is a spherical one, put after it, from the simple vowels: eee, eee, ooo, uuu, ððð. The diphthongs were as follows: ai, au, ei, eu, ēu, ou, ōi, ēi, ʻui, ōi, auei, euei, iou, ggg, ggg, ggg, aiau, 10 [ieu], ēu, oiu, ōu, ggg, [ggg], aueieu, oiuu, ēu, three times for a male soul. The third shape is spherical. The second shape, being put after it, has two sounds. The male soul's third shape (consists) of the simple vowels: aaa, eee, ēee, iii, ooo, uuu, ððð, ōðð, ððð. [And] this shape is different [from] the first, but [they resemble] each other [and they] make some [ordinary sounds] of [this sort: aee]oou. And from these (are made) the diphthongs.

So also the fourth and the fifth. With regard to them, they were not allowed to reveal the whole topic, but only those things that are apparent. You (pl.) were taught about them, that you should perceive them in order that they, too, might all seek and find [who] they are, either by themselves alone [. . .] or by each other, or to reveal [destinies] that have been determined from the beginning, either with reference to themselves alone [or] with reference to one another, just as [they] exist with each other [in] sound, whether partially or formally.

[They are] commanded [to] submit or their [part] is generated and formal. Either (they are commanded) by [the long] (vowels) or [by] those of [dual time value, or] by [the short (vowels)] which are small [. . .] 30 or the oxytones or the intermediates or the barytones. And \langle the \rangle consonants exist with the vowels, and individually they are commanded, and they submit. They constitute the nomenclature [of] the angels. And [the] consonants are self-existent,
and] as they are changed <they> submit to the hidden gods by means of beat and pitch and silence and impulse. [They] summon the semivowels, all of which submit to them with one accord; since it is only the [unchanging] double (consonants) that coexist with the semivowels.

But the aspirates [and the inaspirates] and the [intermediates] constitute [the voiceless (consonants). Again ... they] are combined [with each other, and] they are separate from one another. They are commanded, and they submit, and they constitute an ignorant nomenclature. And they become one or two or three or [four] or five or six up to seven having a [simple] sound, <together with> these which [have] two [sounds], ... the place [of the seventeen consonants. Among] the first names [some] are less. And since [these] do not have being, either [they] are an aspect [of] being [or] they divide the nature [of] the mind which [is masculine] (and) which is intermediate.

And you (sg.) put in those that resemble each other [with] the vowels [and] the consonants. Some are: bagadazatha, begedezeth, [bégëdë]zēthē, [bigidizithi, bogo] dozotho, [buguduzuthu], bōgō-dōzōthō. [And] the rest ... ba[bebebibobubo]. But the rest are different: abebebi'bob, in order that you (sg.) might [collect] them, and be separated from the angels.

And there will be some effects. The first (fem.), which is good, is from [the] triad. It ... has need of ... their shapes. The dyad and the monad do not resemble anything, but they are first to exist. The dyad, being divided, is divided [from the] monad, [and it] belongs to the hypostasis. But the tetrad received (the) [elements], and the pentad received concord, and the [hexad] was perfected by itself. The [hebdomad] received beauty, [and the] ogdoad received concord, and the [heptad] was ready ... greatly. And the [decad revealed] the whole place. But the eleven and the [twelve] have traversed not having ... its higher ... seven ... name(s) ... promise that ... begin [to separate] them by means of a mark [and] a point, the [one which quarrels from the one which is an enemy].

Thus ... of being ... the [letters ...] in [a holy] or according to a [bond] existing separately. [And] <they> exist with each other in generation or [in birth. And] according to ... generation] they do not have ... these ... one ... speaking [the] riddle.

Because within [the] sense-perceptible world there exists the tem-
ple [which measures] seven hundred [cubits], and a river which [... within] ever, they [... three] to the four [... seals] clouds 35 [and the] waters, and the [forms] of the wax images, [and] some emerald likenesses.

For the rest, I will [teach you (sg.)] about them. This is [the] generation of the names. That (fem.) which [was not] generated [... from the] beginning [... 15 with regard to [... 18 time(s), when [confined], when spread out, when [diminished]. But there exists the gentle [word], and there exists another word which [approaches] being [... 1 in this manner ...]. And he [... 1 the difference [... 1 and the [... 36 the all and a [... 1 the [undivided] beings 1 and the power [... 1 having [a] 5 share in [the joy] 1 separately and [... 1 whether [... 15 power [... he] exists [in] every place [... 1 them always. [He] dwells with the corporeal 20 and the incorporeal ones.

This is the word of the hypostases 1 that one should [... in this way. If [ ...] with their 25 [ ...] helping [those who stir up] the [ ...] manifest [ ...] if one 37 knows him, he will [call] upon him. 1

But there are words, some 1 of which are [two 5 but others] existing 1 [separately ... 13 and] they [ ...] 15 or those which [ ...] 17 or according to [those that] have 1 duration. And [these] 1 either are separate from [them] 20 or they are joined to one another, 1 or with themselves, either [the] 1 diphthongs, or the 1 simple [vowels], or every [ ...] 1 or [ ... 25 or [ ... 1 exist] just as [ ... 1 exist ...] 1 the [consonants ...] 38 they exist individually 1 until they are divided 1 and doubled. Some 1 have the power 5 [ ...] according to the [letters 1 that are consonants ...] 12 become [ ... 15 by themselves [ ...] and three (times) 1 [for the] vowels, 1 and twice 1 [for] the consonants, 20 [and] once for 1 the entire place, and with 1 ignorance for 1 [those which] are subject to change 1 [ ... which] became 25 [ ...] together with the [entire 1 place ...] finally.

And 1 [ ...] they all 1 [ ... they] are 39 hidden, but they were pronounced 1 openly. They did not 1 stop without being revealed, 1 nor did they stop without 5 naming the angels. 1 The vowels 1 [join] the 1 [consonants, whether] without 1 [or] within, 10 [ ...] they 1 said [ ... 1 teach you (sg.) ...] 1 again [for ever. They were counted] 1 four times, (and) they were [engendered] 15 three times, and they became [ ...]. 18

For these reasons we have acquired 1 sufficiency; for it is fitting that 20 each one acquire 1 power for himself to bear fruit, 1 and that we 1 never cast 1 aspersions [on] the mysteries 25 [ ...] the [ ...]. 1

For [ ...] which [is ... 1 the] souls [ ...] 1 the] signs of the Zodiac [ ...] 40 a new hypostasis.
And the reward which will be provided for such a one is salvation.

But the opposite will happen there to the one who commits sin.

In order that before you (sg.) examine the one who (words), one might [tell] another [about an] exalted power and a divine knowledge and a might which cannot be resisted. But you shall examine who is worthy that he should reveal them, knowing that those who commit sin down to as they [the Father] that which is fitting. Do not desire to give power to the sense-perceptible world. Are you (pl.) not attending to me, who have received salvation from the intelligible world? But (as for) these (words) — watch yourselves - do not them as a(n) understand and he takes the rest, I will speak of them. The [perfection in order that it might increase who commit sin the embodied souls did not understand them. Those that are upon the earth as well as those outside of the body, those in heaven, are more than the angels. The place which we [talked] about in [every] discourse, these stars book(s) whether already into the [blessed is whether he is gazing at the two or he is gazing at the seven planets or at the twelve signs of the Zodiac or at the thirty-[six] Decans are these reach up to [the rest] and these numbers, whether [those in heaven] or those upon the earth, together with those that are under the [earth], according to the relationships and the divisions among these, and in the rest parts [according to kind and] according to [species they will submit since she has power above apart stars every body(s) a place divine Barbelo] reveal them in this manner this [intelligible angels], as she [intelligible above] save(d) from them [world] and [world] they came those who is like the voice of name(s) [and for ever] (pp. 47-54 missing)

(after) I was silent, [I said], "Tell me, what is the power will wash entire generation greatly, the much he is, and all in the knowledge persevere the great for I became bone(s) of the in the worldly (pp. 59-60 missing) which is under your daughters for just as the kingdom of. But this one every in the one who not. [And ...].
For it is [...] who [...] you (pl.) did not] know the [...] for the [...] partially [...] 63 in [...] remainder] down [...] the] earth. And they] [spoke] like the angels [...] he was like the] wild [animals].

And he said, [...] for] ever [...] from [...] the number [...] I saw [...] 21 and his [...] a [voice ...] and [...] his 64 I [...] because I [saw] all of [the lights] around [me, blazing] with] fire. [And [...] 5 me in their midst [...] 16 angel(s) [who ...] beside me. [And [...] 1 the [one ...] 1 Gamaliel, 20 [the one] who is in command of [the spirits] which [...] 65 the angels [...] which receive [...] all of them ...]

with those whom they [...] 5 and] he [took] me [...] he finished ... 10 her] members [...] 14 the [invisible ...] judgment ...] 1 thrown [...] every [...] which is placed ... 21 fountain] of [...] immortality ...] living [...] the two [...] silent 25 ... god(s)] 66 wash it (fem.) from [...] 1 of God ...] 1 the one whom they [sealed] 1 has been adorned [with the] seal of] heaven. [...] 11 to his [...] 1 great [...]. 17

And I [saw ... 19 unmixed ...] 1 those who [...] 67 they will become [...] of God [...] 1 a woman [...] 1 while she is in [travail 5 ...] when she gives birth, [...] 10 with [...] 12 all of [...] 1 thing [...] men [...] 15 [...] 1 women [and men 1 of this kind ... 1 no one] of] those [that are upon the] earth] [knew] that [...] 1 every [...] them, 20 [and they will] take pity on these, [together with the] 1 home-born], for these will [pay ...] God [...] 24 aeon(s) [...] 68 with those who will [...] 1 who have [...] 1 God [...] 1 from the [beginning ...] 5 in [the ...] 1 fear [...] 8 name(s) ... 12 mysteries] 1 in [...] 1 God [...] 16 manifest [...] 1 those who will know [him]. 1

[M]arsanes
THE INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE (XI, I)

Introduced by
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Translated by
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The Interpretation of Knowledge offers a unique opportunity to see how a gnostic teacher uses New Testament writings and applies them to the church. Features of style and structure suggest that the text presents a homily intended for delivery in a service of worship. The structure of the discussion follows a common pattern of worship, in which readings from the gospel are followed by readings from the apostle (that is, from Paul). Correspondingly, an early section of The Interpretation of Knowledge (9,21-14,15) uses passages known from Matthew to interpret the Savior's teaching and his passion; the following section (14,15-21,34) uses texts from 1 Corinthians and probably Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians to interpret the church as the "body of Christ."

The author is concerned to address a community that is torn by jealousy and hatred over the issue of spiritual gifts. Some members refuse to share their spiritual gifts with one another; others envy those who have received such gifts as prophecy and public speaking and so stand out in the congregation. Some despise others whom they consider ignorant (that is, lacking gnosis); the rest feel slighted and resentful.

The author's concern throughout The Interpretation of Knowledge is to rectify this divisive situation. Having recalled how the Savior taught the oneness of the Father (9,28-29), and, further, how the "great Son" voluntarily accepted humiliation for the sake of his "small brothers" (14,28-29), he now applies the lessons of unity and of humility to the church. First he recalls how the church received redemption; the Savior abolished the "old bond of debt" which enslaved those "condemned in Adam" (14,34-36; cf. Cl 2:14) and proclaimed in its place the "edict of the Father" (14,29-31), offering forgiveness of sins and release from death (14,36-38). From 13,20 through 21,35 the author takes up Paul's metaphor of the body and its members (cf. Ro 12:4-8; 1 Co 12:12-31) and combines it with the images of Christ as the Head of the body, the church (cf. Cl 1:18; 2:19; Ep 4:15-16) in order to remind the members that they all share in the "same body" and the "same Head." Despite the diversity of gifts (cf. 1 Co 12:4), each member shares in the same grace (16,18-24; cf. Ro 12:6); the same power which inspires the speaker enables the listener to understand what he says (16,31-38). Those who receive lesser gifts are not to complain, but to rejoice that they also share in the body (18,28-38; 1 Co 12:14-26). Those who receive greater gifts, such as knowledge (gnosis; cf. 1 Co 12:8) are not to despise others as inferior or ignorant (17,25-26). On the contrary, "you are ignorant when you hate
THE INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE (XI,7)

them" (17,27), for those who show hatred and jealousy toward others demonstrate by their attitude that they still resemble the jealous and ignorant demiurge. These attitudes betray their ignorance of God (15,30-33), the true Father, and of his Son.

Amplifying Paul's image of the church as a spiritual organism, the author takes up the metaphor of the plant with roots, branches, and fruits, "the roots have a connection with one another, and their fruits are undivided" (19,31-33). As the roots exist for the sake of the fruits and for another, "let us become like the roots, since we are equal" (19,36-37). The text concludes with warnings of persecution (20,20-38) and the exhortation to overcome sin; those who do overcome it shall receive a "crown of victory, even as our Head was glorified by the Father" (21,30-34).

The author, who identifies himself as a member of the church, shares scriptural texts and terms familiar to us from early Christian orthodoxy, while using Valentinian theology to interpret these to his audience. This teacher envisions the church he addresses as including both psychic and pneumatic Christians; he may have addressed this homily to both, or specifically to the small circle of the elect. This text offers a significant primary source for understanding how some Gnostic Christians - and specifically certain Valentinian Christians - understand the church in the light of Jesus' teaching and of Paul's letters.

THE INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE

XI 1, 1-21, 35

[... 14 they came to] believe by means of [signs 1 and] wonders [and fabrications. 1 The likeness] that came to be through [them 1 followed] him, but through [1 reproaches] and humiliations [before they received 1 the apprehension] of a vision [they fled 20 without having] heard [that the Christ] 1 had been crucified. 1 [But our] generation is fleeing since it does not yet 1 [even believe that the Christ 1 is alive. In order] that our faith 25 [may be] holy (and) pure, 1 [not relying upon] itself actively, but 1 [maintaining] itself planted in 1 [him, do not] say: "Whence 1 [is the] patience to measure faith?", 30 for each one is persuaded 1 [by the things] he believes. If 1 he disbelieves them, then [he] would be unable 1 [to be persuaded]. But it is a great thing 1 for a man who has 35 faith, since he is [not] in unbelief, 1 which is the [world].

[Now] the world 1 [is the place of] unfaith [and 1 the place of death]. And death [exists as 2 ... 15 likeness and] they will [not believe]. 1 A holy thing is the faith [to see 1 the likeness]. The opposite is [unfaith 1 in the likeness]. The things that he will grant [them 1 will support] them. It was impossible [for them 20 to attain] to the imperishability [...] 1 will [become ...] 1 loosen [...] 24 those who] were sent [...]. 1 For [he who]
is distressed [will not believe]. He [is unable] to bring a [great] church since it is gathered out of [a small] gathering.

He became an [emanation of] the trace. For also they say [about] a likeness that it is apprehended [by means of his trace]. The structure [apprehends by means of the likeness, but God] by means of his members. [He knew] before they were begotten, [and they will know] him. And the one who [began] one from [the first] them. He will [rule over them]. For it is [necessary] for [each one] The Savior [removed himself] since it is [fitting]. Indeed, [not ignorant] but [carnal is the word who] took him as a husband. And it is [he] who exists [as an image], since [that one (masc.)] also [exists], as well as that one (fem.) [who brought] us forth. [And she caused] him to know [that] she is [the Womb]. This [is a] marvel of hers [that she] causes us to transcend [patience]. But this is the marvel: he [loves the one who] was first to [permit] a virgin [. . .]. It is fitting to [her] unto death [. . . desire] to practice [. . .]. Therefore [she yielded] to him in [her path]. He was [first to fix] our eye upon this virgin [who is fixed] to the [cross] that is in those places. And we see [her water] which the supreme authority [granted] to the one [in whom] there is [a sign. This is that] water of [immortality which] the great [powers] will grant to [him while he is] below [the likeness] of [her young son]. She did not stop] on his account. She [the] he became [. . .] in the word that [appears] to the [. . .] word that [appears] to the [. . .]. He [did not 5 . . .] in [. . .] through [. . .] come from those places. [Some fell] in the path. Others [fell in the rocks]. Yet still others he [sowed in the thorns]. And still others [he gave to drink . . .] and the shadow. Behold [. . .] he [. . . 25 And] this [is the eternal reality] before the souls come forth from [those who] are being killed.

But he was being pursued in that place by the trace produced by the Savior. And he was crucified and he died — not his own [death, for] he did [not at all] deserve to die [because of] the church of mortals. [And he was nailed] so that [they] might keep him in the church. [He answered] her [with] humiliations, since [in this] way he had [borne] the suffering which he had [suffered]. For Jesus is for us a [likeness] on account of this the entire [structure] and [. . . the great] bitterness of the [world] us with the [by thieves] the [slaves down] to Jericho [they] [received down]. For [down] to [those who] will wait while the entire de-
fect restrains them until the final reality that is their portion, since he brought us down, having bound us in nets of flesh. Since the body is a temporary dwelling which the rulers and authorities have as an abode, the man within, after being imprisoned in the fabrication, fell into suffering. And having compelled him to serve them, they constrained him to serve the energies. They split the Church so as to inherit power and having touched him before it is the beauty that will wound but she herself to the her since they had struck imperishable. This that he remain virgin. The her beauty and therefore her. He hastened he did not put up with they despise For when the Mother had the Mother her enemy the teaching the force nature behold a maiden he is unable first the opposite. But how has he maiden he was not able he [became killed him alive he reckoned her better than life since he knows that if world created him him to raise him up from upon the regions those whom they rule. But emitted him he dwells in him the Father of the All be more to her him. He like into he has them them each one will be worthy take him and the teacher should hide himself as if he were a god who would embrace his works and destroy them. For he also spoke with the Church and he made himself her teacher of immortality, and destroyed the arrogant teacher by teaching her to die.

[And this teacher made a living school, for that teacher has another school: while it teaches us about the [dead] writings, he, on the other hand, was causing us to remove ourselves from the surfeit of the world; we were being taught about our death through them.

Now this is his teaching: Do not call to a father upon the earth. Your Father, who is in heaven, is one. You are the light of the world. They are my brothers and my fellow companions who do the will of the Father. For what use is it if you gain the world and you forfeit your soul? For when we were in the dark we used to call many "father," since we were ignorant of the true Father. And this is the great conception of all the sins pleasure. We are like...}
... him to ... soul ... men who ... the [dwelling] place. 

[What] now is the [faith laid down] by the master who [released] him [from the great] ignorance [and] the [darkness of the ignorant eye?] He reminded him of the good things [of his Father] and the race. For he said [to him], "Now the world is not yours; [may you not esteem] the form that is in it [as] advantageous; rather (it is) disadvantageous and a [punishment]." Receive now the [teaching of the one who was] reproached — an advantage and [a profit] for the soul and receive [his shape. It is the] shape [that] exists in the presence [of the Father], the word and the height, that let you know him before you have been led astray while in (the) flesh of condemnation. Likewise I became very small so that through my humility I might take you up to the great height, whence you had fallen. You were taken to this pit. If now you believe in me, it is I who shall take you above through this shape that you see. It is I who shall bear you upon my shoulders. Enter through the rib whence you came and hide yourself from the beasts. The burden that you bear now [is] not yours. Whenever [you (fem.)] go from his glory from the first. From [being counted] with the female, [sleep brought labor] and the [sabbath] which [is the] world. For from [being counted] with the Father, [sleep brought] [the sabbath] [and] [the exodus] from the [world of the beasts]. For the [world] is from [the] [beasts] and it is a [beast]. Therefore [he] that is lost [has been reckoned to the] crafty one, and [that one] is from [the beasts] that came forth. They put upon [him a] garment of condemnation, for the female [had no] other garment [for clothing] her seed except the one she first brought on the sabbath. For no beast exists in [the] Aeon. For the Father does not keep the sabbath but actuates the Son, and through the Son he continued to provide himself with the Aeons. The Father has living rational elements from which he puts on my [members] as garments. The man this is the name. The [he] emitted [himself and] he emitted the [reproached one. The one who] was reproached changed (his) name and, [along with that which would be] like the reproach he [appeared] as flesh. And [the humiliated one has no] equipment. He has [no] need of the [glory that] is [not his]; he has his own [glory] with the [name], which is the [Son]. Now he came that we might become glorious [through the] humiliated one [that] dwells in the [places of humiliation. And through [him] who was reproached we receive the [forgiveness] of sins. And through the one [who] was reproached and the one who [was redeemed] we receive grace.
But who [is it] that redeemed the one who was reproached? It is [the] emanation of the name. For just as the flesh has need of a name, so also is [the] flesh an Aeon that Wisdom has emitted. It received the majesty that is descending, so that the Aeon might enter the one who was reproached, that we might escape the disgrace of the carcass and be regenerated in the flesh and blood of destiny. He and the Aeons they] accepted the Son [although he was] a complete mystery [each one] of his [members ...] grace. [When he cried out, he] was separated from the Church like portions of the darkness from the Mother, while his [feet] provided him traces, and [these] scorched the path of [the] ascent to the Father.

But [what is the way and manner (in) which] it (fem.) became their Head? Well, it (fem.) made the [dwelling place to bring forth] the light [to those] who dwell within him so that [they might] see the [ascending] Church. For the Head drew itself up from the pit; it was bent over the cross and looked down to Tartaros so that those below might look above. Hence, for example, when someone looks at [someone], then the face of the one who looked down looks up; so also once the Head looked from the [height] to its members, our members [went] above, where the Head was. And it, the cross, was undergoing nailing for the members, and solely that they might be able have because they were [like ...] slave. The consummation [is thus: He whom] she indicated will be completed by the [one who] indicated. And the seeds [that remain will endure] until the All is separated [and takes] shape.

And thus the decree will be fulfilled, for just as the woman who is honored until death [has] the advantage of time, [so too will it] give birth. And this offspring [will] receive [the body] appointed for it [and] it [will become perfect]. He has a generous [nature since] the Son of God dwells in [him]. And whenever he acquires the All, whatever he possesses will have dissolved in the fire because it greatly despised and outraged the Father.

Moreover, when the great Son was sent after his small brothers, he spread abroad the edict of the Father and proclaimed it, opposing the All. And he removed the old bond of debt, the one of condemnation. And this edict that was: Those who made themselves enslaved have become condemned in Adam. They have been [brought] from death, received forgiveness for their sins and been redeemed by since we are worthy and but I say and these. For [...], is worthy to God. And the Father ...
Christ removed himself from all these, since he loves his members with all his heart. [One who is jealous sets] his members against one another. If he is not jealous, he will not be removed from (the) other members and the good which he sees. [By having a] brother who regards us as he also is, one glorifies the one who gives us grace. Moreover, it is fitting for [each] of us to [enjoy] the gift that he has received from God, and that we not be jealous, since we know that he who is jealous is an obstacle in his (own) path, since he destroys only himself with the gift and he is ignorant of God. He ought to rejoice [and] be glad and partake of grace and bounty. Does someone have a prophetic gift? Share it without hesitation. Neither approach your brother jealously nor empty as they escape. They are ignorant that in this way they have them in order that they may [reflect] perforce upon the things that you want [them to think] about when [they think about] you. [Now] your brother also has his grace: Do not belittle yourself, but rejoice and give thanks spiritually [and] pray for that [one in order that] you might share the grace that dwells within him. So do not consider him foreign to you, rather, (as) one who is yours, whom each of your (fellow) members received. By loving the Head who possesses them, you also possess the one from whom it is that these outpourings of gifts exist among your brethren.

But is someone making progress in the Word? Do not be hindered by this; do not say: “Why does he speak while I do not?” For what he says is (also) yours, and that which discerns the Word and that which speaks is the same power. The Word or a hand only, although they are a single body. [Those who belong to us] all serve the Head together. And each one of the members reckons it as a member. They can not all become entirely a foot or entirely an eye or a hand. These members will not live alone; rather they are dead. We know that they are being put to death. So why do you love the members that are still dead, instead of those that live? How do you know that someone is ignorant of the brethren? For you are ignorant when you hate them and are jealous of them, since you will not receive the grace that dwells within them, being unwilling to reconcile them to bounty of the Head. You ought to [give] thanks for our members and [ask] that you too might be granted [the] grace that has been given to them. For the Word is rich,
generous, and kind. Here he gives away gifts to his men without jealousy according to 18 [. . . 12 appeared in each] of the members [. . .] himself 15 [. . .] since they do not fight [at all with one another] on account of [their] difference(s). [Rather] by laboring with [one another they will] work with one another, [and if] one of them 20 [suffers, they will] suffer with him, and [when each one] is saved, they are saved [together].

Moreover, [if they] would wait for [the exodus] from the (earthly) harmony, they will [come to the Aeon]. If they are fit to share 25 [in] the (true) harmony, how much the more [those who] derive from the [single] unity? They ought to be reconciled with one another. Do not accuse your Head because it has not appointed you as an eye but rather as a finger. And do not [be] jealous of that which has been put in the class of an eye or a hand or a foot, but be thankful that you do not exist outside the body. On the contrary, you have the same Head on whose account the eye exists as well as the hand and the foot and the rest of the parts. Why do you despise the one that is appointed as [. . .] it desired to [. . .] you slandered [. . .] does not embrace [. . .] unmixed [body . . .] chosen [. . .] dissolve [. . .] of the Aeon [. . .] descent [. . .] however [plucked] us from <the> [Aeons that exist in] that place. [Some] exist in the [visible] Church — those who exist in the [Church] 20 of men — and [unanimously] they proclaim [to one another] the Pleroma of their aeon. And some exist [for death in] the Church on whose behalf [they] go — she for whom they are [death] — while others are for life. Therefore they [are] lovers of abundant life. And each of the rest [endures] by his own root. 30 He puts forth fruit that is like him, since the roots [have] a connection with one another and their fruits are undivided, the best of each. They possess them, existing for them and for one another. So let us become like the roots since we are equal 20 [. . .] that Aeon [. . .] those who are not ours [. . .] above the [. . .] grasp him [. . .] since [. . .] your soul. He will [. . .] we gave you to him [. . .]. If you purify [it, it abides in] me. If you enclose [it, it belongs to the] Devil. [Even] if you [kill] his forces that are active, it will be with you. For if [the soul] is dead, still it [was enacted upon] (by) the rulers and [authorities].

What, now, do you think of as spirit? Or do they persecute men of [this] sort to death? Are they not satisfied to be with the soul and (so) seek it? For every place is [excluded] from them by 30 [the] men of God so long as they exist in flesh. And when
they cannot see them, since they (the men of God) live by the spirit, they tear apart what appears as if thus they can find them. But what is the profit for them? They are senselessly mad! They rend their surroundings! They dig the earth! For if the sins are many, how much the more now is the jealousy of the Church of the Savior. For each one was capable of both (types) of transgression, namely that of an adept and (that of) an ordinary person. It is still a single ability that they possess. And as for us, we are adepts at the Word. If we sin against it, we sin more than Gentiles. But if we surmount every sin, we shall receive the crown of victory, even as our Head was glorified by the Father.

The Interpretation of Knowledge
A VALENTINIAN EXPOSITION (XI,2),

with

ON THE ANOINTING, ON BAPTISM A AND B,

and

ON THE EUCHARIST A AND B

Introduced by

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Translated by

JOHN D. TURNER

A Valentinian Exposition expounds the origin of the creation and the process of redemption in terms of Valentinian theology, specifically in terms of the myth of Sophia. The tractate thus offers the only original Valentinian account of that myth: The Tripartite Tractate (1,5) recounts another version that features the Logos instead of Sophia.

The author begins by promising to reveal "my mystery," and follows the account with baptismal and eucharistic prayers and benedictions. This suggests that A Valentinian Exposition offers a kind of secret catechism for candidates being initiated into gnosis. Following the revelation of the mystery, the candidate is invited to participate in anointing, baptism, and the eucharist, as Gnostic Christians understand these sacraments.

Besides relating the Sophia myth and referring to sacramental rituals, A Valentinian Exposition has a third remarkable feature: it gives firsthand evidence of theological controversies among different groups of Valentinian theologians. The heresiologists attest that gnostic teachers disagree among themselves on the interpretation of fundamental doctrines; thus A Valentinian Exposition demonstrates the truth of Tertullian's statement that Valentinian Christians "disagree on many specific issues, even with their own founders" (Praescr. 42). Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and others mention several such issues involving the story of Sophia: the interpretation of the primordial source (in what sense is it monadic or dyadic), of Limit (what are his functions) and the passion of Sophia (what motivated it). While the church fathers sketch out various positions taken on these issues, the author of A Valentinian Exposition engages each issue, challenging certain views and advocating others.

Valentinian theologians disagreed, first of all, on the question of whether the primordial root of all is a monad or a dyad. According to Irenaeus, Valentinus himself and the followers of his student Ptolemy said that the primal source is a dyad consisting of the Father of the All and his feminine counterpart, Silence,
the Mother of all things (*Haer.* 1.11.1). But this author insists, on the contrary, that the Father is one, singular, a monad; and that the Silence, far from being the Father's dyadic syzygy, was merely the state of tranquility in which the Father reposed in his original solitude.

Second, this author discusses the function of Limit: he himself maintains that Limit possesses four powers, while other Valentinians attribute to Limit only two of those four powers. As this author interprets the story, Limit first separated Sophia's passion from the pleroma, and so protected and confirmed the aeons against the violation her transgression incurred. Yet Limit also restrained Sophia from being absorbed into the Father, and, finally, he separated her passions from her and confirmed her as well.

A third issue of controversy among Valentinian theologians concerned the interpretation of Sophia's suffering. According to Irenaeus' account, some Valentinians said that Sophia, in transgressing her role in the pleroma, only expressed the involuntary longing of all the aeons for closer communion with the Father (*Haer.* 1.2.2); others said that she willfully and audaciously attempted to rise above the condition of interdependence she shared in common with all the other aeons, and dared to imitate the Father himself (*Haer.* 1.2.3). The author of *A Valentinian Exposition* apparently takes a position closer to the latter view, which indicates that Sophia willfully violated the pleromic harmony, and later repented of this as she turned back to the Father.

This text goes on to describe how Sophia, after suffering in isolation, repented and received Christ, who descended to become her divine counterpart. Their divine reunion demonstrates the Father's will that "nothing . . . happen in the pleroma apart from a syzygy" (i.e., that all beings except himself be interdependent); and shows how all things "will come to be in unity and reconciliation."

Finally, this text offers what appear to be liturgical fragments of a Valentinian celebration of baptism and the eucharist: in this respect, as in others mentioned above, the text offers a unique and valuable opportunity to investigate various forms of Valentinian thought and ritual practice.

**A VALENTINIAN EXPOSITION**

*XI 22, 1-39, 39*

[... ] I enter [...] I the abundance I [...] 5 those who [... 16 I will speak] my mystery I [to those who are] mine and I [to those who will be mine]. Moreover it is these who I [have known him who] is, the Father, that 20 [is, the Root] of the All, the I [Ineffable One I who] dwells in the Monad. I [He dwells alone] in silence, I [and silence is] tranquility since, after all, I [he was] a Monad and no one 25 [was] before him. He dwells I [in the Dyad] and in the Pair, and his I Pair is Silence. And he possessed I the All dwelling within I him. And as for Intention and 30 Persistence, Love and Permanence, I they are indeed unbegotten.
God came forth: the Son, Mind of the All, that is, it is from the Root of the All that even his Thought stems, since he had this one (the Son) in Mind. For on behalf of the All he received an alien Thought since there was nothing before him. From that place it is he who moved a gushing [spring]. Now this [is the] Root [of the All] and Monad without any [one] before him. Now the second [spring] exists in Silence and [speaks] with him alone. And the [Fourth] accordingly is he [who] restricted himself [in the] Fourth: while dwelling in the Three-hundred-sixtieth, he first brought himself (forth), and in the Second [he] revealed his will [and] in the Fourth he spread himself [out].

While these things are due to the Root of the All, let us for our part [enter] his revelation and his goodness and his descent and the All, that is, the Son, the Father of the All, and the Mind of the Spirit; for he was possessing this one before. He is [one] who appears in Silence, and he is Mind of the All dwelling secondarily with [Life]. For he is the projector [of] the All and the [very] hypostasis of the Father, that is, [he is] the [Thought] and his descent below.

When he willed, the First Father revealed himself in him. Since, after all, because [of him] the revelation is available to the All, I for my part call the All "the desire of the All." And he took such a thought concerning the All — I for my part call the thought "Mono­genes." For now God has brought Truth, the one who glorifies the Root of the All. Thus it is he who revealed himself in Monogenes, and in him he revealed the Ineffable One the Truth. [They] saw him [dwelling] in the Monad [and] in the Dyad [and] in the Tetrad. [He] first brought forth [Monogenes and Limit]. And Limit [is the separator] of the All [and the confirmation of the All], since they are the hundred. He is the [Mind . . .] the Son. [He is] completely [ineffable] to the All, and he is the confirmation and [the] hypostasis of the All, the [silent veil], the [true] High Priest, [the one who has] the authority to enter the Holies of Holies, revealing the glory of the Aeons and bringing forth the abundance to (fragrance). The East is the primal [sanctuary] and [the] treasury of the All. And [he] encompassed the All, [he] who is higher [than the] All. These for their part [sent] Christ [forth to establish her] just as [they] were established [before her] descent. [And they say concerning] him: He is not manifest, but invisible to [those remaining within Limit].
And he possesses four powers: a separator and a confirmer, a form-provider and a substance-producer. Surely [we alone] would discern their presences and the time and the places which [the likeness] have confirmed because they have 27 from these [places] the love is emanated [the entire Pleroma]. The persistence [endures] always, and [for also] 25 the time [more that is], the proof of his [great love].

So why a separator and a confirmer and a substance-producer and a form-provider as others have [said]? For they say concerning Limit that he has two powers, a (separator) and a confirmer, since it separates Depth from the Aeons, in order that 28 These, then of [Depth ...]. For [... is] the form [the Father of the Truth ... say] that Christ [the Spirit ... Monogenes [... has ...].

[It is a great and] necessary thing for us to [seek with] more diligence and [perseverance] after the scriptures and [those who] proclaim the concepts. For about [this] the ancients say, "[They] were proclaimed by God." So let us know his unfathomable richness! [he wanted servitude ...] he [became] of their life [...] they look steadfastly at their book and they regard one another’s appearance.

[That] Tetrads projected the Tetrads which is the one consisting of Word and [Life and Man and] Church. [Now the Uncreated One] projected Word and Life. Word is for the glory of the Ineffable One while Life is for the glory of [Silence], and Man is for his own glory while Church is for the glory of Truth. This, then, is the Tetrads begotten according to the likeness of the Uncreated (Tetrads). And [the] Tetrads is begotten from Word and Life brought forth decades so as to make the Pleroma become a hundred, and the Dodecad from Man and Church brought forth and the Triacontad so as to make [the three] hundred sixty become the Pleroma of the year. And the year of the Lord perfect perfect according
to [... 22 Limit] and 1 [... Limit [... 27 the] greatness 1 which [...] the 1 [goodness ...] him. Life 30 [... ] suffer 1 [... ] by 1 the face [...] in the presence of 1 the [Pleroma ...] which he wanted 1 [... And] he wanted 35 to [leave] the Thirtieth − 1 being [a syzygy] of Man and 1 Church, that is, Sophia − to surpass [the Triacontad and] bring the Pleroma 32 [ [...] 16 his [ [...] 1 but [ [...] and] 1 she [ [...] 22 the [All ...] 28 but [ [...] 1 who [ [...] the All [...]. 32 He made [ [...] the thoughts 1 and [...] the] Pleroma 1 through the Word [...] his 35 flesh. These, then, [are the Aeons that] are like 1 them. After the [Word] entered 1 it, just as [I] said before, 1 also [the one who comes to be] with 1 the Uncontainable One [brought] forth 33 [ [...] 11 before they 1 [...] forth [...] 1 hide him from 1 [...] the syzygy and 15 [...] the movement and 1 [...] project the 1 Christ [...] and the seeds 1 [...] of the cross 1 since [...] the imprints] of the nail 20 wound [...] perfection. 1 [Since it is] a perfect form 1 [that should] ascend into 1 [the Pleroma], he did not [at all] want 1 [to] consent to the suffering, 25 [but he was] detained 1 [...] him by Limit, 1 that is, by the syzygy, 1 since her correction will 1 not oc­cur through anyone except 30 her own Son, 1 whose alone is the fullness 1 of divinity. He willed 1 within himself bodily 1 to leave the powers and he descended. 35 And these things (passions) Sophia suffered 1 after her son ascended from 1 her, [for] she knew 1 that she dwelt in a 34 [ [...] 10 in unity] 1 and [restoration. They were] 1 stopped [...] 1 the brethren [...] 1 these. A [...] did not [...] 15 I became [...] 1.1 Who indeed [are] they? [The [...], on the one hand, 1 stopped her [...] 1 on the other hand, [...] 1 with the [...] 1 her. These [moreover are those who were] looking at me, 20 these who [... these] 1 who considered [...] the 1 [death]. They were stopped [...] her 1 and she repented [and she] 1 be­sought the Father of the [truth], saying, 25 "Granted that I have [re­nounced] 1 my consort. Therefore [I am] 1 beyond confirmation as well. I deserve 1 the things (passions) I suffer. 1 I used to dwell in the Pleroma 30 putting forth the Aeons and 1 bearing fruit with my consort." 1 And she knew what she was 1 and what had become of 1 her.

So they both suffered; 35 they said she laughs since she remained 1 alone and imitated the Uncontainable 1 One, while he said she [laughs] since 1 she cut herself off from her consort. 35 [...] 10 Indeed [Jesus and] Sophia 1 revealed [the creature]. Since, after all, 1 the seeds [of] Sophia are 1 incomplete [and] formless, 1 Jesus [contrived] a creature of this 15 [sort] and made it of the 1 seeds while Sophia worked with 1 him. [For] since they are seeds 1 and [without form], he descended 1 [and brought] forth that 20 pleroma [of aeons] which are in that 1 place,
[since even the uncreated ones of] 1 those [Aeons are of] the pattern of the [Pleroma] 1 and the [uncontainable] Father. 1 The Uncreated One 25 [brought forth the pattern] of the uncreated, 1 for it is from the uncreated 1 that the Father brings forth 1 into form. But the creature 1 is a shadow of pre-existing 30 things. Moreover, this Jesus created 1 the creature, and he worked 1 from the passions 1 surrounding the seeds. And he 1 separated them from one another, 35 and the better passions he introduced 1 into the spirit and the worse ones 1 into the carnal.

Now 1 first among [all] those passions 36 [...] 9 nor [...] 1 him, [since, after all], Pronoia 1 caused [the] correction to 1 project shadows and 1 images of [those who] exist [from] the 1 first and [those who] are [and] 15 those who shall be. This, [then, is] the 1 dispensation of believing 1 in Jesus for the sake of [him who] inscribed 1 the All with [ likenesses and] 1 images [and shadows]. 20

After Jesus brought [forth further] 1 he brought [forth] for 1 the All those of the Pleroma 1 and of the syzygy, that [is, the] 1 angels. For simultaneously with the 25 [agreement] of the Pleroma 1 her consort projected 1 the angels, since he abides in 1 the will of the Father. For this 1 is the will of the Father: 30 not to allow anything to happen in the 1 Pleroma apart from a syzygy. 1 Again, the will of the Father is: 1 always produce 1 and bear fruit. That she should suffer, 35 then, was not the will 1 of the Father, for she dwells 1 in herself alone without 1 her consort. Let us 37 [...] 9 another one [...] 1 the Second [...] 1 the son of another [...] 1 is the Tetrad of the world. [And] 1 that Tetrad put forth [fruit] 1 as if the Pleroma [of the world were] 15 a Hebdomad. 1 And [it] entered [images] 1 and [likenesses and angels] 1 and [archangels, divinities] 1 and [ministers]. 20

When all [these things were brought to pass] 1 by Pronoia [...] 1 of Jesus who [...] 1 the seeds [...] 1 of Monogenes [...] 25 Indeed they are [spiritual] 1 and carnal, 1 the heavenly and the 1 earthly. He made them 1 a place of this sort and 30 a school of this sort for 1 doctrine and for form. 1

Moreover this Demiurge 1 began to create a 1 man according to his image on the one hand 35 and on the other according to the likeness of those who 1 exist from the first. It was this sort of 1 dwelling place that she used 1 for the seeds, namely 38 [...] 10 separate 1 [...] God. When they 1 [...] in behalf of man, 1 [since] indeed [the Devil] is one 1 [of] the divine beings. He removed himself 15 and seized the entire [plaza] 1 of the gates and he 1 [expelled] his [own] root 1 from [that] place 1 [in the body] and 20 [carcasses of flesh], for [he is enveloped] by 1 [the man] of
God. And [Adam sowed] him. Therefore [he acquired] sons who [angered one another. And] Cain [killed] Abel his brother, for [the Demiurge] breathed into [them] his spirit. And there [took place] the struggle with the apostasy of the angels and mankind, those of the right with those of the left, those in heaven with those on earth the spirits with the carnal, and the Devil against God. Therefore the angels lusted after the daughters of men and came down to flesh so that God would cause a flood. And he almost regretted that he had created the world [the consort] and [Sophia and her Son] and the angels [and the seeds]. But the syzygy is the [complete one] and Sophia and Jesus and [the angels] and the seeds are [images of] the Pleroma. Moreover the Demiurge [cast a shadow over] the syzygy and [the] Pleroma, and Jesus and [Sophia] and the [angels] and the seeds. [The complete one glorifies] Sophia; the image [glorifies] Truth. [And] the glory [of the seeds] and Jesus [are] those of [Silence and] Monogenes. [And] the [angels] of the males and [the seminal ones] of the females [are] all Pleromas. Moreover whenever Sophia [receives] her consort and Jesus receives the Christ and the seeds and the angels, then [the] Pleroma will receive Sophia joyfully, and the All will come to be in unity and reconciliation. For by this the Aeons have been increased; for they knew that should they change, they are without change.

ON THE ANOINTING

XI 40, 1-29

[...] according to [...] the type of [...] see him. It is fitting for [you at this time] to send thy Son [Jesus] Christ and anoint us so that we might be able to trample [upon] the [snakes] and [the heads] of the scorpions and [all] the power of the Devil since he is the shepherd of [the seed]. Through him we [have known] thee. And we [glorify] thee: [Glory] be to thee, the Father in the [Son, the Father] in the Son, the Father [in the] holy [Church and in the] holy [angels]! From now on he abides [forever in] the perpetuity of the Aeons, forever until the [untraceable] Aeons of the Aeons. Amen.
ON BAPTISM A
XI 40, 30-41, 38

[This] is the fullness of the summary of knowledge which (summary) was revealed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Monogenes. These are the sure and necessary (items) so that we may walk in them. But they are those of the first baptism 41 [... 10 The first] baptism is the forgiveness of sins [... ] [who] said, [... ] you to the [...] 15 your sins the [...] is a pattern of the [...] of the Christ [which is the] equal of the [...] within him. [...]. 20 For the [...] of Jesus [...]. Moreover, the first [baptism] is the forgiveness [of sins. We] are brought [from those] by [it 25 into] those of the right, [that is], into the [imperishability which is] the Jordan. But that place is [of] the world. So we have [been sent] out [of the world] into the Aeon. For [the] interpretation of John is the Aeon, while the interpretation of that which is the Jordan is the descent which is [the upward progression], that [is, our exodus] from the world [into] the Aeon.

ON BAPTISM B
XI 42, 1-43, 19

[... 10 from the] world [into the Jordan] and from [the blindness] of the world [into the sight of] God, from [the carnal] into the spiritual, [from] the physical [into the] angelic, from [the created] into the Pleroma, [from] the world [into the Aeon], from the [servitudes] into sonship, [from] entanglements [into one another], from the desert [into] our village, from [the cold] into the hot, [from 25 ...] into a [...] and we [...] into the [...] thus we were brought [from] seminal [bodies into bodies] with a perfect form. [Indeed I entered by way of example [the remnant] for which the Christ [rescued] us in the [fellowship] of his Spirit. And [he brought] us forth who are [in him, and] from now on the souls [will become] perfect spirits.

Now [the things] granted to us [by the first] baptism 43 [... 15 invisible [... which] is his, since [... 18 speak] about ...].
ON THE EUCHARIST A

XI 43, 20-38

[We give] thanks [to you and we] celebrate the eucharist, O Father, remembering for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ that they] come forth [ . . . ] invisible [ . . . ] thy [Son . . . ] his [love . . . ] to [knowledge . . . ] they are doing thy will [through the] name of Jesus Christ [and] will do thy will [now and] always. They are complete in every spiritual gift and [every] purity. [Glory] be to thee through thy Son [and] thy offspring Jesus Christ [from now] forever. Amen.

ON THE EUCHARIST B

XI 44, 1-37

ALLOGENES (XI, 3)

Introduced by

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The tractate *Allogenes* is a revelation discourse in which a certain Allogenes receives divine auditions and visions and records them for his "son" Messos. The fictive nature of this repeated address of Allogenes to Messos is indicated by the name Allogenes, which means "stranger," "one of another race," and often in this period designates Seth or a representative of the Sethian spiritual race. The reader is thus encouraged to identify with Messos and learn from Allogenes how to overcome the fear and ignorance Allogenes initially feels, how to meditate on each step of revealed knowledge, and ultimately how to ascend into full realization of one's spiritual self within the divine.

Although *Allogenes* presents itself as a single revelation discourse, it can be divided into two parts. Part One (45,1-57,23) highlights five revelations of the female deity Youel to Allogenes. Her revelations are complex mythological descriptions of the divine powers, particularly the aeon of Barbelo. Part Two (57,24-69,19) describes in more philosophical language the ascent of Allogenes as a progressive revelation by the heavenly luminaries. Its final stage, the "primary revelation of the Unknown One," reveals the transcendent God as invisible, unfathomable, incomprehensible, "the spiritual, invisible Triple Power" which is "the best of the best" and exists, paradoxically, as "the nonbeing Existence."

The differences between these two parts of *Allogenes* can be explained in terms of different sources being used or in terms of the one writer's purpose. Source theories try to determine where certain traditions come from and how they have already developed. The Barbelo mythology of Part One is found also in *The Apocryphon of John* (BG 8502,2; NHC II,1; III,1; IV,1) where it is associated with an account of how Sophia brought deficiency into the universe. *Allogenes'* Barbelo Gnosticism, like that of *Zostrianos* (VIII,1) and *The Three Steles of Seth* (VII,5), is not interested in how evil began but in positive revelation of divine reality. Part Two of *Allogenes* also parallels *The Apocryphon of John* to the extent of a full-page description of the transcendent God in terms of what God is not. But again it departs from this tradition in the same direction as do *Zostrianos* and *The Three Steles of Seth* by presenting this knowledge as an ascent ritual in a way parallel to Hermetic Gnosticism (*Corp. Herm.* 1,24-26 and NHC VI,6). Apparently the author has taken both Barbelo Gnosticism and philosophical monism from the same general tradition as *The Apocryphon of John* and put them in sequence with certain linking passages for a single purpose.
Assuming that the reader has already been released from evil, the writer in the persona of Allogenes leads on up the heavenly path, praising the divine, into the blessing of knowledge, the vitality of life and finally the existence that is nonexistence. The ascent rituals of Hermetism refer occasionally to community life, and *The Three Steles of Seth* uses the first person plural to praise God at each ascent level. But here the instructions are spoken to a single person who is reading and could be meant as self-help in an individual's search for God.

This tractate has attracted wide interest because the Neoplatonist Porphyry said that Plotinus attacked certain Gnostics who "produced revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianos and Nicotheos and Allogenes and Messos and other such people" (*Vit. Plot.* 16). If this quote does indeed refer to this book named *Allogenes*, and to documents close to it (*Zostrianos* VIII, I bears a coded subtitle, "Words of Zoroaster") as many are proposing, it suggests a somewhat different relation of the Gnostics to later Platonism than is commonly assumed. Not only did Gnostics clearly borrow many philosophical themes from Platonism, but Platonists and Neoplatonists were being forced to deal with Gnostic schools as rivals to their own. And though Plotinus in his own tractate against the Gnostics does his best to ridicule their dualism, cult, and jargon, it is clearly the monistic Gnostics of the *Allogenes* sort who challenge him most. It is they who attribute to revelation the truths he is convinced that they have derived from Plato; it is they who believe that through self-knowledge they become superior to the heavenly bodies (*Enn.* II. 9.5-11). The question that remains is whether the Gnostics may not have had a reverse influence on Neoplatonism, specifically whether these gnostic texts could be the source of a certain existence-life-thought triad which is not attested in Neoplatonism before Proclus in the fifth century (*Theol.* 101-03).

An Alexandrian origin of the original Greek text of *Allogenes* not long after 300 C.E. would allow time for its Greek circulation and its Coptic translation before it was placed in the Nag Hammadi library early in the next century.

**ALLOGENES**

**XI 45, 1-69, 20**

[...]

6 since they are 1 [perfect individuals and dwell] 1 all [together, joined with] the 1 [mind], the guardian [which I provided, 10 who] taught you (sg.). [And] it is [the power that 1 exists] within you that often [extended itself 1 as word] 1 from the Triple-Powered One, [that One 1 of] all [those] who [truly] exist 15 with the [Immeasurable One], the 1 eternal [Light of] the Knowledge 1 that appeared, the 1 male virginal [Youth, 1 the first] of the Aeons from 20 [a] unique triple-[powered Aeon], 1 [the] Triple-Powered One who 1 [truly exists], for when [he was stilled, 1 (he) was extended] and 1 [when he was extended], he became [complete 25 and] he received [power] from 1 all of
He knows himself and the perfect Invisible [Spirit]. And he came to be in an Aeon who knows [that] she knows That One. [And] she became Kalytpos [who] acted in those whom she knows. He is a perfect, invisible, noetic Protophanes-Harmedon. [And] empowering the individuals, she is a Triple-Male. And being individually 46 ..., 6 Individual on the one hand, they are together] on the other hand, [since she] is an existence of [theirs], and she [sees] them all [also] truly (existing). [She] contains the divine Autogenes.

"When she [knew] her [Existence] and when she stood, [she brought] This One (masc.), since he saw them [all] existing individually as [he] is. And [when they] become as he is, [they shall] see the divine Triple-Male, the power that is [higher than] God. [He is] the [Thought] of all these who [exist] together. If he [ponders them, he] ponders [the] great male [...]. 25 noetic Protophanes, the procession of these. When [he] sees it, [he sees also those who truly exist] and the procession [of those who are] together. And when he [has seen these], he has seen the [Kalyptos]. And if he [sees] one of the hidden ones, [he] sees the Aeon of Barbelo. And as for [the] unbegotten offspring of That One, if one [sees] how he [lives ... you have heard about the abundance of] each one of them [certainly].

[But] concerning the invisible, spiritual Triple-Powered One, hear! [He exists] as an Invisible One who is incomprehensible to them all. He contains them all within [himself], for [they] all exist because of [him]. He is perfect, and he is greater than perfect, and he is blessed. [He is] always [One] and [he] exists in them all, being ineffable, unnameable, [being One] who exists through [them all] — he whom, [should] one discern [him, one would not desire] anything that [exists] before him among those that possess existence, for [he is] the source from which they were all emitted. He is prior to perfection. He was prior to every divinity, [and] he is prior to every blessedness since he provides for every power. And he (is) a nonsubstantial substance, since he is a God over whom there is no divinity, the transcending of whose greatness and (beauty) power. It is not impossible for them to receive a [revelation of] these things if [they] come together. Since it is impossible for the [individuals] to comprehend the Universal One [situated in the] place that is higher than perfect, they apprehend by means of a First [Thought] — (it is) not as Being (alone), [but] it is along with the latency of Existence that he confers Being. He [provides] everything for [himsel}
since it is he who shall come to be when he recognizes himself]. And he is [One] who subsists as a [cause] and source [of Being] and [an] immaterial [material and an] innumerable [number and a formless] form and a [shapeless] shape and [a powerlessness and a power and an insubstantial substance and a motionless motion and an inactive activity. [Yet he is a] provider of [provisions and] a divinity [of] divinity – but whenever they apprehend, they participate the first Vitality and an undivided activity, an hypostasis of the First One from the One who truly exists. And a second activity however, is the [...]. He is endowed with blessedness] and goodness, because [when he is] recognized [as the] traverser of the boundlessness of the Invisible Spirit [that subsists] in him, it (the boundlessness) turns him to [it (the Invisible Spirit) in] order that it might know what is within him and how he exists. And he was becoming salvation for every one by being a point of departure for those who truly exist, for through him his knowledge endured, since he is the one who knows what he is. But they brought forth nothing beyond themselves, neither power nor rank nor glory nor aeon, for they are all eternal. He is Vitality and Mentality and That-Which-Is. For then That-Which-Is constantly possesses its Vitality and Mentality, and {Life has} Vitality possesses {non}-Being and Mentality. Mentality possesses Life and That-Which-Is. And the three are one, although individually they are three.

Now after I heard these things, my son [Messos, I was] afraid, and [I turned toward the] multitude thought [... 6 gives] power to [those who are capable] of knowing these things [by] a revelation that is much [greater]. And I was capable, although flesh was upon me. I heard from you about these things and about the doctrine that is in them since the thought which is in me distinguished the things that are beyond measure as well as the unknowables. Therefore I fear that my doctrine may have become something beyond what is fitting.

And then, my son Messos, the all-glorious One, Youel, spoke to me again. She made a revelation to me and said, “No one is able to hear [these things] except the great powers alone, O Allogen. A great power was put upon you, which the Father of the All, the Eternal, put upon you before you came to this place, in order that those things that are difficult to distinguish you might distinguish and those things that are unknown to the multitude you might know, and that you might escape (in safety) to the One who is yours, who was first
to save and who does not need to be saved. 51 [ . . . to] you [a] form [and a revelation of] the invisible, spiritual Triple-Powered One outside of which [dwells] an undivided, incorporeal, [eternal] knowledge.

"As with all the Aeons, the Aeon of Barbelo exists, also endowed with the types and forms of those who truly exist, the image of Kalyptos. And endowed with the intellectual Word of these, he bears the noetic male Protophanes like an image, and he acts within the individuals either with craft or with skill or with partial instinct. 25 He is endowed with the divine Autogenes like an image, and he knows each one of these. He acts separately and individually, continuing to rectify the failures from nature. He is endowed with the divine Triple-Male as salvation for them all (and) in cooperation with the Invisible Spirit. He is a word from a counsel, <he> is the perfect Youth. And this hypostatis is a 52 [ . . .].

[ . . . my soul went slack] and I fled [and was] very disturbed. And [I] turned to myself [and] saw the light that surrounded me and the Good that was in me, I became divine.

And the all-glorious One, Youel, anointed me again and she gave power to me. She said, "Since your instruction has become complete and you have known the Good that is within you, hear concerning the Triple-Powered One those things that you will guard in great silence and great mystery, because they are not spoken to anyone except those who are worthy, those who are able to hear; nor is it fitting to speak to an uninstructed generation concerning the Universal One that is higher than perfect. But you have because of the Triple-Powered One, the One who exists in blessedness and goodness, the One who is responsible for all these.

"There exists within him much greatness. Inasmuch as he is One in a 53 [ . . .] of the [First Thought, which] does not fall away [from those who dwell] in comprehension [and knowledge] and [understanding. And] That One moved motionlessly in that which governs, lest he sink into the boundless by means of another activity of Mentality. And he entered into himself and he appeared, being all-encompassing, the Universal One that is higher than perfect.

"Indeed it is not through me that he is to such a degree anterior to knowledge. Whereas there is no possibility for complete comprehension, he is (nevertheless) known. And this is so because of the third silence of Mentality and the second undivided activity which appeared in the First Thought, that is, the Aeon of Barbelo, together
with the Indivisible One of the divisible likenesses and the Triple-Powered One and the non-substantial Existence."

<And> the power appeared by means of an activity that is at rest and silent, although it uttered a sound thus: zza zza zza. But when she heard the power and she was filled Solmis! [...] according to the Vitality, [that is thine, and] the first activity which derives from divinity: Thou art great, Armedon! Thou art perfect, Epiphaneus!

"And according to that activity of thine, the second power and the Mentality which derives from blessedness: Autoer, Beritheus, Erigenaor, Orimenios, Aramen, Alphleges, Elelioupheus, Lalemeus, Yetheus, Noetheus! Thou art great! He who knows thee knows the Universal One! Thou art One, thou art One, He who is good, Aphredon! Thou art the Aeon of Aeons, He who is perpetually!"

Then she praised the Universal One, saying, "Lalameus, Noetheus, Senaon, Asine[us, ...]riphanios, Mellephaneus, Elemaoni, Smoun, Optaon, He Who Is! Thou art He Who Is, the Aeon of Aeons, the Unbegotten, who art higher than the unbegotten (ones), Yatomenos, thou alone for whom all the unborn ones were begotten, the Unnameable One! knowledge."

[Now after I] heard these things, I saw the glories of the perfect individuals and the all-perfect ones who exist together, and the all-perfect ones who are before the perfect ones.

[Again the greatly glorious One, Youel, said to me, "[O Allogenese, in an unknowing knowledge] you know that the [Triple-Powered One] exists before [the glories]. They do not exist [among those who exist]. They do not exist [together] with those who exist. Rather all these exist [as divinity] and [blessedness and] existence, [and as] nonsubstantiality and non-being."

[And then I] prayed that [the revelation] might occur to me. [And then] the all-[glorious One], Youel, said to me, [O Allogenese], of course, [the Triple-] Male [is something beyond] substance. Yet [were he insubstantial] those who exist [in association] with the [generation of those] who [truly] exist. [The self-begotten ones exist] with the [Triple-Male].

"If you [seek with a perfect seeking, then] you shall know [the Good that is] in you; then [you will know yourself] as well, (as) one who [derives from] the God [who truly pre-exists]. [For] after [a
hundred] 1 years there shall [come to you] 1 a revelation [of That One] 1 by means of [Salamex] 25 and Semen [and ... the] 1 Luminaries [of the Aeon of] 1 Barbelo. And [that beyond what] 1 is fitting for you, [you shall not know] 1 at first, so as not [to forfeit your] 30 kind. [And if so], 1 then when [you receive] 1 a conception [of That One, then] 1 you are filled [with] 1 the word [to completion]. 35 Then [you become divine] 1 and [you become perfect. You receive] 1 them [...] 57 the seeking [...] 1 the Existence [...] 1 if it [apprehends] 1 anything, it is [apprehended by] 1 that one and by 10 the very one who is comprehended. 1 And then he 1 becomes greater 1 who comprehends and knows than 1 he who is comprehended and 15 known. But if 1 he descends to his nature, 1 he is less, for the 1 incorporeal natures have not associated with 1 any magnitude; having 20 this power, they are everywhere 1 and they are nowhere, 1 since they are greater than every magnitude, 1 and less than every exiguity." 1

Now after 25 the all-glorious One, Youel, said these things, 1 she separated from me and left 1 me. But I did not despair 1 of the words that I heard. 1 I prepared myself 30 therein and I deliberated 1 with myself for a hundred years. 1 And I rejoiced exceedingly, 1 since I was in a great 1 light and a blessed path 35 because those whom I was 1 worthy to see as well 1 as those whom I was worthy to hear 1 (are) those whom it is fitting 1 that the great powers alone 58 [...] 6 of [God]. 1

[When 1 the completion of] the one hundred years [drew nigh, 1 it brought] me a blessedness 10 of the eternal hope 1 full of auspiciousness. 1 I saw the good divine Autogenes; 1 and the Savior 1 who is the 15 youthful, perfect Triple-Male Child; and his 1 goodness, the 1 noetic perfect Protophanes-Harmedon; 1 and the blessedness 1 of the Kalyp­tos; and the 20 primary origin of the blessedness, 1 the Aeon of Barbelo 1 full of divinity; 1 and the primary origin of 1 the one without origin, the 25 spiritual, invisible Triple-Powered 1 One, the Universal One that 1 is higher than perfect.

When <I> was taken by the 1 eternal Light out of 1 the garment that was upon 30 me, and taken up to 1 a holy place whose 1 likeness can not be 1 revealed in the world, 1 then by means of a 35 great blessedness I 1 saw all those about whom I had 1 heard. And I 1 praised all of them and 1 59 [stood] upon my knowledge and [I 1 inclined to] the knowledge [of] 1 the Universals, the Aeon of Barbelo. 1

And I saw [holy] powers 5 by means of the [Luminaries] 1 of the virginal male Barbelo 1 [telling me 1 that] I would be able to test what 1 happens in the world: "O 10 Allogenesis, behold your blessedness 1 how
it silently abides, by which you know your proper self and, seeking yourself, withdraw to the Vitality that you will see moving. And although it is impossible for you to stand, fear nothing; but if you wish to stand, withdraw to the Existence, and you will find it standing and at rest after the likeness of the One who is truly at rest and embraces all these silently and inactively. And when you receive a revelation of him by means of a primary revelation of the Unknown One — the One whom if you should know him, be ignorant of him — and you become afraid in that place, withdraw to the rear because of the activities. And when you become perfect in that place, still yourself. And in accordance with the pattern that indwells you, know likewise [that] it is this way in [all such matters] after this (very) pattern. And [do not] further dissipate, [so that] you may be able to stand, and do not desire to [be active] lest you fall [in any way] from the inactivity in [you] of the Unknown One. Do not [know] him, for it is impossible; but if by means of an enlightened thought you should know him, be ignorant of him."

Now I was listening to these things as those ones spoke them. There was within me a stillness of silence, and I heard the Blessedness whereby I knew my proper self, and I withdrew to the Vitality as I sought myself, and I joined into it, and I stood, not firmly but silently. And I saw an eternal, intellectual, undivided motion that pertains to all the formless powers, (which is) unlimited by limitation.

And when I wanted to stand firmly, I withdrew to the Existence, which I found standing and at rest like an image and likeness of what is conferred upon me by a revelation of the Indivisible One and the One who is at rest. I was filled with revelation by means of a primary revelation of the Unknowable One. [As though] I were ignorant of him, I knew him and I received power by him. Having been permanently strengthened I knew the One who exists in me and the Triple-Powered One and the revelation of his uncontainableness. [And] by means of a primary revelation of the First One (who is) unknowable to them all, the God who is beyond perfection, I saw him and the Triple-Powered One that exists in them all. I was seeking the ineffable and Unknowable God — whom if one should know him, he would be absolutely ignorant of him — the Mediator of the Triple-Powered One who subsists in stillness and silence and is unknowable.

And when I was confirmed in these matters, the powers of the
Luminaries said to me, "Cease hindering the inactivity that exists in you by seeking incomprehensible matters; rather hear about him in so far as it is possible by means of a primary revelation and a revelation.

"Now he is something insofar as he exists in that he either exists and will become, or acts or knows, although he lives without Mind or Life or Existence or Non-Existence, incomprehensibly. And he is something along with his proper being. He is not left over in some way, as if he yields something that is assayed or purified [or that] receives or gives. And he is not diminished in any way, [whether] by his own desire or whether he gives or receives through another. Neither does he have any desire of himself nor from another; it does not affect him. Rather neither does he give anything by himself lest he become diminished in another respect; nor for this reason does he need. Mind, or Life, or indeed anything at all. He is superior to the Universals in his privation and unknowability, that is, the non-being existence, since he is endowed with silence and stillness lest he be diminished by those who are not diminished.

"He is neither divinity nor blessedness nor perfection. Rather it (this triad) is an unknowable entity of him, not that which is proper to him; rather he is another one superior to the blessedness and the divinity and perfection. For he is not perfect but he is another thing that is superior. He is neither boundless, nor is he bounded by another. Rather he is something [superior]. He is not corporeal. He is not incorporeal. He is not great. He is not a number. He is not a [creature]. Nor is he something that exists, that one can know. But he is something else of himself that is superior, which one cannot know.

"He is primary revelation and knowledge of himself, as it is he alone who knows himself. Since he is not one of those that exist but is another thing, he is superior to (all) superlatives even in comparison to (both) what is (properly) his and not his. He neither participates in age nor does he participate in time. He does not receive anything from anything else. He is not diminishable, nor does he diminish anything, nor is he undiminishable. But he is self-comprehending, as something so unknowable that he exceeds those who excel in unknowability.

"He is endowed with blessedness and perfection and silence — not (the blessedness) nor the perfection — and stillness. Rather it (these attributes) is an entity of him that exists, which one cannot
And he is much higher in beauty than all those [that] are good, and he is thus unknowable to all of them in every respect. And through them all he is in them all, not only as the unknowable knowledge that is proper to him. And he is united with the ignorance that sees him. Whether one sees in what way he is unknowable, or sees him as he is in every respect, or would say that he is something like knowledge, he has sinned against him, being liable to judgment because he did not know God. He will not be judged by That One who is neither concerned for anything nor has any desire, but it (judgment) is from himself because he did not find the origin that truly exists. He was blind apart from the eye of revelation that is at rest, the (one) that is activated, the (one) from the Triple-Power of the First Thought of the Invisible Spirit. This one thus exists from something set firmly on the beauty and a [first emergence] of stillness and silence and tranquility and unfathomable greatness. When he appeared, he did not need time nor (did he partake) of eternity. Rather of himself he is unfathomably unfathomable. He does not activate himself so as to become still. He is not an existence lest he be in want. Spatially he is corporeal, while properly he is incorporeal. He has non-being existence. He exists for all of them unto himself without any desire. But he is a greater summit of greatness. And he is higher than his stillness in order that he saw them all, although they do not concern themselves with That One at all, nor, if one should receive from him, does he receive power. Nothing activates him in accordance with the Unity that is at rest. For he is unknowable; he is an airless place of the boundlessness. Since he is boundless and powerless and nonexistent, he was not giving Being. Rather he contains all of these in himself, being at rest (and) standing out of the one who stands continually, since there had appeared an Eternal Life, the Invisible and Triple-Powered Spirit which is in all of these who exist. And it surrounds them all, being higher than them all. A shadow [... ] he was filled with power. And he stood [before them], empowering them all, and he filled them all."

And concerning all of these (things) you have heard certainly. And do not seek anything more, but go. We do not know whether the Unknowable One has angels or gods, or whether the One who is at rest was containing anything within himself except the stillness,
which is he, lest he be diminished. It is not fitting to spend more time seeking. It was appropriate that you (pl.) alone know and that they speak with another one. But you will receive them 68 [. . . 6 and he said to me], "Write down [the things that I shall tell] you and of which I shall remind you for the sake of those who will be worthy after you. And you will leave this book upon a mountain and you will adjure the guardian: 'Come Dreadful One.'"

And after he said these (things), he separated from me. But I was full of joy, and I wrote this book which was appointed for me, my son Messos, in order that I might disclose to you the (things) that were proclaimed before me in my presence. And at first I received them in great silence and I stood by myself, preparing myself. These are the things that were disclosed to me, O my son 69 [Messos . . . 14 proclaim them, O my] son [Messos, as the] seal [for] all [the] books of Allogenes. 20

Allogenes
HYPSIPHRONE (XI,4)

Introduced and translated by

JOHN D. TURNER

_Hypsiphrone_, which means "high-minded one" or perhaps "she of exalted thought," is the fourth and last treatise of Codex XI of the Coptic library from Nag Hammadi. It presently consists of four large and two small fragments containing the lower portions of the inner and outer margins of two papyrus leaves, which must have originally contained the entirety of this short treatise. It is written in the same script as the much longer and better preserved treatise of that Codex, _Allogenes_, although there is no discernible further relationship beyond these two treatises. _Hypsiphrone_ is written in an apparently standard Sahidic Coptic dialect, unlike the other treatises of Codex XI. It bears the superscript title "Hypsiph[rone]," the remainder of the title being restored from other occurrences within the treatise; since the conclusion of the treatise is not extant, it may or may not have borne a subscript title.

Apart from the poor condition of the treatise, even its cryptic title affords little insight into its content. The _incipit_ "The book (or scroll) [concerning the things] that were seen [by] Hypsiphrone being [revealed] in the place of [her] virginity" adds little more. Although there is mentioned a plurality of persons speaking with one another, the treatise does not appear to be a dialogue. Instead, the whole is presented as a speech of Hypsiphrone who reports the receipt of certain revelations during her descent from the "place of her virginity" into the world. The only figure mentioned by Hypsiphrone is one Phainops, "he of the gleaming eye," who apparently presides over a fount of blood into which he breathes, and which seems to produce a fiery effect.

One may conjecture that Hypsiphrone represents some form of the personified thought of a high deity who leaves her dwelling in the transcendental realm, where there are no distinctions of gender, to descend to the earthly realm at the time of the creation of humankind. There she encounters Phainops, probably in the act of creating humankind, who apparently produces "a [man in the likeness] of blood" from his fiery fount of blood.

In spite of the paucity of text, what remains seems to have some affinity with the group of gnostic texts generally designated as Sethian. To judge from the name Hypsiphrone, one may have to do here with the Sethian figure of Eleleth, called Phronesis in _Hyp. Arch. (93,8-97,21)_ , one of the traditional Sethian Four Illuminators, whose name might be derived from Aramaic _'illith_, "the tall one," which could be rendered by Greek _hypsiphrone_.

The fount of blood may refer to the heavenly Adamas or heavenly archetype of Adam, described in _Orig. World (108,2-31)_ as the "enlightened bloody one" (based on the Hebrew pun on _adam_, "man," and _dam_, "blood"). In this case, Hypsiphrone would be the Illuminator Eleleth, who in some Sethian texts is regarded as the abode of Sophia and certain "repentant souls" and in others
(Trim. Prot., Gos. Eg.) is held responsible for the act usually ascribed to Sophia: that of producing the demiurge Yaldabaoth. Eleleth/Hypsiphrone would also be responsible for the projection below of Adamas, the image of God after whom the earthly Adam is modeled. In any case, Hypsiphrone is certainly a figure similar to that of the descending and restored Sophia. Phainops, "radiant-faced one," might then be a name for either the enlightened archetypal Adamas, or, since he seems to be distinguished from the "fount of blood," for the fiery angel Sabbaoth, the brother of the evil demiurge produced by the breath of Zoe, Pistis Sophia's daughter, in an effort to imprison the demiurge (Hyp. Arch. 95,5-96,4).

Thus, although it bears no trace of the traditional Sethian names for these figures, Hypsiphrone may in fact be very closely related to the other Sethian texts.

**HYPSIPHRONE**

**XI 69, 21-72, 33**

Hypsiphrone

The book [concerning the things] that were seen [by] Hypsiphrone being [revealed] in the place of [her] virginity. [And she listens] to her brethren [...][Phainops] and [...] and they speak [with one another] in a [mystery].

Now I [was first by individual] ranking [...] I came [forth to the place] of my [virginity] and I went down to the [world. Then I] was told [about] them (by) those who abide in [the place] of my [virginity].

And I went down [to the world] and they said [me, "Again] Hypsiphrone [has withdrawn] outside the [place of her] virginity." Then the one [who] heard, Phainops, [who breathes] into her fount of blood, spread [out] for her.

[And] he said, ["I am Phainops ...] err [... the number] of just the [human] remnants or that I may see a [man, the blood-likeness or ...] of a [... fire] and a [... in] his hands.

Then [as for me, I said to] him, ["Phainops] has not [come] upon me; he [has not] gone astray. [... see] a man [... him [...] 72
For [...] which he said [... ] Phainops this [...].

I saw him and [he said] to me, "Hypsiphrone, [why do you dwell] outside me? [Follow me] and I will [tell you about them]." So I followed [him], for [I] was in [great] fear. And he [told me] about a fount of [blood] that is [revealed by] setting afire [... he said [...].
THE SENTENCES OF SEXTUS (XII, I)

Introduced and translated by

FREDERIK WISSE

Before the discovery of the fragments of the Coptic version in Nag Hammadi Codex XII, *The Sentences of Sextus* were known through Latin, Syriac, Armenian, and Georgian translations, as well as through two manuscripts in the original Greek. Apart from some patristic quotations, the Coptic version is by far the oldest witness to this collection of wisdom sayings. It appears to be a faithful and consistent translation from the Greek, and it stands closer to the critical text provided by Henry Chadwick (*The Sentences of Sextus; A Contribution to the History of Early Christian Ethics*, Texts and Studies 5, Cambridge: The University Press, 1959) than the two Greek witnesses and the other versions. As such it is of considerable value for the study of the text and of the character of the document.

Of the approximately thirty-nine original pages of the tractate, ten survive. This assumes that the Coptic version did not contain more than the 451 sentences included in the Latin translation of Rufinus. The numeration of the sentences follows Chadwick’s edition.

Though most of the sentences are of non-Christian origin, they enjoyed considerable popularity in Christian circles. Their presence among the Nag Hammadi tractates is not surprising. They share an ascetic outlook with many other writings in the collection. Indeed, the overwhelmingly ascetic tone of the entire Nag Hammadi library may indicate that the compilers and users of these books were part of the early monastic movement in Egypt. For a discussion of the moral teaching of Sextus, the reader is referred to Chadwick’s edition.

THE SENTENCES OF SEXTUS

XII 15, 1-16, 28; 27, 1-34, 28

(157) is [a sign] of ignorance. 1
(158/159) [Love] the truth, and the lie [use] like poison. 1
(160) [May] the right time precede your words. 5
(161/162) [Speak] when it is not proper [to be silent], but [speak concerning] the things you know [only] then [when] it is fitting. 1
(163a) [The] untimely [word is characteristic] of an evil mind. 10
(163b) [When it is] proper to act, do not [use a] word.
(164a) Do not wish [to speak] first in the midst of [a crowd].
(164b) [While it is] a skill [to speak], it is also [a] skill [to be silent].
(165a) It is [better] for you to be defeated [while speaking the truth], than to be victorious [through deceit].

(165b) [He] who is victorious through [deceit] is [defeated] by the truth.

(165c) [Untrue words] are characteristic of evil persons.

(165d) [There has to be] a great [crisis before] the lie [is necessary].

(165e) [When there is] someone, while you speak [the truth], even if [you lie there is no sin].

(165f) Do not deceive anyone, especially him who needs [advice].

(165g) [If you speak] after [many (others) you will see better] what is profitable.

(166) [Faithful] is he who is first with all [good works].

(167) Wisdom leads [the soul] to the place of [God].

(168) [There is no] kinsman of the [truth except] wisdom.

(169) [It is not] possible for a [believing] nature to [become fond of] lying.

(170) A fearful and slavish nature will not be able to partake in faith.

(171a) When you are [faithful, what] it is fitting to say [is not of greater value than] the hearing.

(171b) When you are with believing persons, desire [to listen rather than] to speak.

(172) A pleasure-loving man is useless in everything.

(173) When there is no [(accounting of) sin, do not speak] in anything (which is) from [God].

(174) [The] sins of those who are [ignorant are] the shame of those who have [taught them].

(175) Those on account of whom [the name of God] is blasphemed are dead before God.

(176) [A wise man] is a doer of good works after God.

(177) [May your life confirm] your words before those who hear.

(178) What it is [not right to do], do not even consider [doing it].

(179) [What you do not want to happen to you, do not do it] yourself [either].

(180) [What] it is shameful [to do, is also] (pp. 17-26 are missing)

(307/308) He is [a wise man who commends God to men, [and God] thinks more highly of the wise man than his own [works].

(309) [After] God, no one is as free as the wise man.
(310) [Everything] God possesses  the wise man has also.
(311/312) The wise man shares in the [kingdom] of God; an evil man does not want the foreknowledge of God to come to pass.
(313) An evil soul flees from God.
(314) Everything bad is the enemy of God.
(315) What thinks in you, say with your mind that it is man.
(316) Where your thought is, there is your goodness.
(317) Do not seek goodness in flesh.
(318) He who does not harm the soul neither does (so) to man.
(319) After God, honor a [wise] man, since he is the servant of God.
(320) [To make] the body of your soul a burden is [pride], but to be able to restrain it gently when it is necessary is blessedness.
(321) [Do not become] guilty of your own death. Do not be [angry at him] who will take you out of the body and kill you.
(322) If someone brings the wise man out of the body wickedly, he rather [does what is] good for him, [for] he has been released from bonds.
(323) The fear of death grieves man because of the ignorance of the soul.
(324) (It were better) for you had the man-killing sword not come into being; but when it comes, say with your mind that it does not exist.
(325/326a) Someone who says, "I believe," even if he spends a long time pretending, he will not prevail, but he will fall; as your heart is, (so) will be your life.
(326b) A godly heart produces a blessed life.
(327) He who will plot evil against another, [he is] the first [...].
(328) [Let not] an ungrateful man cause you to cease to do [good].
(329) [Do not say with] your mind that [these things] which were asked, (and) [you] gave immediately, are more valuable than [the] receiver.
(330) You will use [great] property, if you give to the needy willingly.
(331) Persuade a senseless brother [not to] be senseless; if he is mad, protect him.
(332/334) Strive eagerly to be victorious over every man in prudence; maintain self-sufficiency.
(333) You cannot receive understanding unless you know first that you possess <it>. In everything there is again this sentence.
(335) The 15 members of the body are a burden to those who do not use them.

(336) It is better to serve others than to make others serve you.

(337) He whom God will not bring out of (the) body, let him not burden himself.

(338) Not only do not hold an opinion which does not benefit the needy, but also do not listen to it.

(339) He who gives [something without] respect commits an outrage.

(340) If you take on the [guardianship of] orphans, you will be [the] father of many children (and) you will be beloved of God.

(341) He whom you serve because of [honor, you have] served for a wage.

(342) If you [have given] that which honors you ..., [you have] given not to man, but [you have given] for your own pleasure.

(343/344) Do not [provoke] the anger of a mob. [Know, then], what is fitting for the fortunate man to [do].

(345) It is better to die than to darken the soul because of [the] immoderation of the belly.

(346) Say with [your] mind that the body is the garment of your soul; keep it, therefore, pure since it is innocent.

(347) Whatever the soul will do while it is in (the) body, it has as witnesses when it goes into judgment.

(348/349) Unclean demons do lay claim to a polluted soul; a faithful (and) good soul evil demons will not be able to hinder in the way of God.

(350) Do not give the word of God to everyone.

(351) For [those who are corrupted by glory] it is not assuring to hear about God.

(352/353) It is not a small danger for us to [speak the] truth about God; [do not say anything about] God before [you have] learned from [God].

(354/356) [Do not] speak with a godless person [about] God; if you are polluted on account of impure works, [do not] speak about God.

(357) [The] true word about God is [the] word of God.

(355) Speak concerning the word about God as if you were saying it in the presence of God.

(358) If first your mind is persuaded that you have been god-loving, then speak to whomever you wish about God.
(359) May your pious works precede every word about God.
(360) Do not wish to speak with a crowd about God.
(361) Be (more) sparing with a word about God (than) about a soul.
(362) It is better to dispose of a soul than to discard at random a word about God.
(363a) You conceive the body of the god-loving man, but you will not be able to rule over his speech.
(363b) The lion also rules over the body of [the wise man]; also the tyrant rules [over it] alone.
(364) If a tyrant threatens you, [then, especially], remember God.
(365) [He who speaks] the word of God [to those for whom it is not lawful, he is the betrayer] of God.
(366) It is better [for you] to be silent about the word of God than to speak recklessly.
(367/368) He who speaks lies about God is lying to God; a man who does not have anything truthful to say about God is abandoned by God.
(369) [It is not] possible for you to know God when you do not worship him.
(370) A man who does evil to someone will not be able to worship God.
(371) The love of man is the beginning of godliness.
(372) He who takes care of men while praying for all of them — this is the truth of God.
(373/374) It is God's business to save whom he wants; on the other hand, it is the business of the pious man to beseech God to save everyone.
(375) When you pray for something and it happens to you through God, then say with your mind that [you have ...].
(376a) [A man who] is worthy of God, [he] is God among [men], and [he is] the son of God.
(376b) Both the great one exists and he who is next to the great one exists.
(377/378) It is better for man to be without anything than to have many things while not giving to the needy; so also you, if you pray to God, he will not give to you.
(379) If you, from your whole heart, give your bread to the hungry, the gift is small, but the willingness is great with God.
(380) He who thinks that no one is in the presence of God, he is not humble towards God.
(381) He who makes his mind like unto God as far as he is able, he is the one who honors God greatly.

(382) God does not need anything, but he rejoices over those who give to the needy.

(383) The faithful do not speak many words, but their works are numerous.

(384) It is a faithful person fond of learning who is the worker of the truth.

(385) Adjust the calamities in order that [...].

(386) [If you] do not do evil to anyone, you will not be afraid of anyone.

(387) The tyrant will not be able to take away happiness.

(388) What it is right to do, do it willingly.

(389a) What it is not right to do, do not do it in any way.

(389b) Promise everything rather than to say, “I am wise.”

(390) What you do well, say with your mind that it is God who does it.

(391) No man who looks down upon the earth and upon tables is wise.

(392) The philosopher who is an outer body, he is not the one to whom it is fitting to pay respect, but the philosopher according to the inner man.

(393) Guard yourself from lying: there is he who deceives and there is he who is deceived.

(394/395) Know who God is, and know who is the one who thinks in you; a good man is the good work of God.

(396) They are miserable because of whom the [word] is blasphemed.

(397) Death will [not] be able to destroy (pp. 35-end are missing).
It is uncertain whether the two fragments presented here in translation come from the same tractate. With no title and only one substantial fragment surviving, the character of the tractate remains obscure. It seems to present ethical teaching within a religious context. The first person singular and plural are used, and the speaker refers to "my Father," which suggests that he may be Jesus. The speaker contrasts himself and his followers with others, referred to in the third person plural, who live in wickedness and do evil deeds. Nothing in the fragments suggests that the tractate was gnostic. There is no reason to doubt that the Coptic represents a translation from the Greek.

(Fragment 1A) [...] 10 us as it is 1 [fitting. ...] each other, but 1 [...] a crowd to receive 1 [...] they speak ill 1 [...] live by wickedness 15 [...] the [...] 1 work evil things to 1 [...] the good things, and they 1 [...] do their own things 1 [...] strangers. There are 20 [...] do their own things 1 [...] works which 1 [...] we ourselves do 1 [...] works of those [...] 1 evil works [...] 25 that which we shall [...] 1 the works which [...] 1 that which [...] 1 every one [...]  

(Fragment 1B) [...] 9 For I speak the [...] 1 know [God ...] 1 gave their [...] 1 error. But [...] 1 they are worthy of the [...] 1 into God [...] 15 And already they have [...] 1 the ignorance [...] 1 the righteousness [...] 1 these were worthy [of ...]. 1 He [...] 20 my Father who is [...] 1 not to them a father [...] 1 I think that [...] 1 this which the [...] 1 I give again to the [...] 25 they forgive [...] 1 spoke it [...] 1 it [...]
(Fragment 2A) [...] 26 philosopher [...] 1 they are not able to [...] 1 philosopher [...] 1 world [...] 1

(Fragment 2B) [...] 27 her [...] 1 begot him [...] 1 think that [...] 1
Trimorphic Protennoia ("The Three-formed [Divine] First Thought") is, in its form, a Barbeloite treatise which has undergone both Sethian and Christian revisions. It is roughly contemporaneous with The Apocryphon of John (mid-second century C.E.), which it resembles in certain interesting ways, and is distinguished by a number of striking parallels to the Fourth Gospel and especially its prologue.

The underlying basis of Trimorphic Protennoia can be seen in the series consistent "I am" self-predicatory aretalogies, in which Protennoia recites her divine identity and role in the creation and salvation of the world. These are structured into an introductory aretalogy (35,1-32) identifying Protennoia as the divine First Thought followed by three similar aretalogies in the same style, the second and third of which form separately titled subtractates in the Trimorphic Protennoia: First, Protennoia is the Voice of the First Thought who descends first as light into darkness to give shape to her fallen members (35,32-36,27; 40,29-41,1). Second, Protennoia is the Speech of the Thought who descends to empower her fallen members by giving them spirit or breadth (42,4-27; 45,2-12; 45,21-46,3). Third, Protennoia is the Word or Logos of the Thought who descends in the likeness of the powers, assumes a human appearance, introduces the illuminatory baptismal rite of the Five Seals and restores her members into the light (46,5-6; 47,5-22; 49,15-22; 50,9-12,18-20).

One cannot fail to notice here a striking resemblance, not only to the language and structure of the Johannine prologue's narration of the descents of the Logos, but also to the similar first-person aretalogy on the three descents of Pronoia found at the end of the longer version of the Apocryphon of John (II,1:30,11-31,25), with which the Trimorphic Protennoia may even be genetically related.

The underlying tripartite aretalogy has been expanded by means of six narrative doctrinal insertions (36,27-40,29; 41,1-42,2; 42,27-45,2; 46,7-47,5; 47,22-49,15; 49,22-50,9). Three of these insertions, whose third-person expository prose breaks the otherwise smooth flow of Protennoia's self-referential speech, are designated as "mysteries" which Protennoia is said to have communicated to the sons of the light.

Essentially, the scheme of the divine First Thought's triple descent into this world is a derivative of speculation at home in the Hellenistic Jewish wisdom schools responsible for the personification of the figure of the divine wisdom and the development of the myth concerning her role in the creation of the world and in the subsequent enlightenment of mankind as it is found especially in 1 Enoch 42, Sirach 24, Wisdom 7-8, and in Philo. It seems that Sophia's two unsuccessful descents in 1 Enoch 42 and her successful one in Sirach 24 were combined into
a total of three descents into the lower world, two resulting in partial liberation, and the third resulting in the final awakening and salvation of those who received her. This is the same pattern that underlies the Johannine prologue, which, though not a Barbeloite composition, was likely also a product of a similar form of wisdom speculation. The unique contribution of the Barbeloites seems to have been the interpretation of the three revelatory descents: first, in terms of a primal divine triad of Father, Mother and Son, second in terms of a theory of progressive revelation in which each successive appearance of the revealer is characterized by an increasing degree of articulateness and finality (Voice, Speech, and Word) and third, the association of the final descent with a Logos figure who confers final enlightenment in the form of transcendentalized baptismal rite called the Five Seals.

It is clear that the *Trimorphic Protennoia* has been secondarily Christianized. Three glosses identifying the Autogenes Son as the Christ in the first subtractate (37,[31]; 38,22; 39,6-7) probably derive from the traditional Barbeloite theogonical material common to *The Apocryphon of John* and Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.29, upon which the author drew for the first narrative insertion. These Christian glosses would have been suggested by an equation between the Christian designation of Christ as *monogenes* and what seems to be a pre-Christian designation for the third member of the Barbeloite Father-Mother-Son triad, namely the Self-Begotten (*autogenes*) Son.

The third subtractate narrates the incognito descent of Protennoia as the Word disguised in the form of the sovereignties, powers, and angels, culminating in the final revelation of herself in the human form of her members below, but it seems to have been supplemented by an alien and tendentious Christological interpretation. In the third subtractate, traditional Christological titles such as Christ, Beloved, Son of God (i.e., "Son of the Archigenetor") and Son of Man are polemically interpreted in a consciously docetic fashion so as to suggest that these titles were inappropriately applied to the human Jesus by the apostolic church. By implication, the apostolic Jesus is shown actually to be the Christ of the evil archons; the apostolic beloved is actually the Beloved of the archons; the apostolic Son of God is the Son of the ignorant world creator; and the apostolic Son of Man is only a human being among the sons of men.

It is interesting that most of these reinterpretations of the Christology of the apostolic church in the *Trimorphic Protennoia* seem to depend on key passages from the Gospel of John to score their point in any acute fashion. It seems that the key to the relationship between these two texts lies in the recognition that *Trimorphic Protennoia* has undergone at least three stages of composition. First, there was the original triad of the aretalogical self-predications of Protennoia as Voice, Speech, and Word that were probably built up out of the Jewish wisdom tradition and maybe out of *The Apocryphon of John*’s similar Pronoia aretalogy itself sometime during the first century C.E.; there is little here that seems specifically gnostic or Christian or Sethian or Barbeloite. Second, this was supplemented, whether by the same or by a different author, by various narrative doctrinal passages based upon traditional Barbeloite theogonical materials similar to those of *The Apocryphon of John* and Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.29. After circulation as a mildly Christian Barbeloite text in this form, the third and last stage of composition seems to have involved a deliberately polemical incorporation of
Christian, specifically Johannine Christian, materials into the aretalogical portion of the third subtractate. One might assign the third compositional stage of *Trimorphic Protennoia* to the period of struggle over the interpretation of the Christology of the Fourth Gospel witnessed by the New Testament letters of John, perhaps the first quarter or half of the second century.

**TRIMORPHIC PROTENNOIA**

**XIII 35, 1-50, 24**

[I] am [Protennoia, the] Thought that [dwells] in [the Light. I] am the movement that dwells in the [All, she in whom the] All takes its stand, [the first]-born among those who [came to be, she who exists] before the All. [She (Protennoia) is called] by three names, although she dwells alone, [since she is perfect]. I am invisible within the Thought of the Invisible One. I am revealed in the immeasurable, ineffable (things). I am incomprehensible, dwelling in the incomprehensible. I move in every creature.

I am the life of my Epinoia that dwells within every Power and every eternal movement and (in) invisible Lights and within the Archons and Angels and Demons and every soul dwelling in [Tartaros] and (in) every material soul. I dwell in those who came to be. I move in everyone and I delve into them all. I walk uprightly, and those who sleep I awaken. And I am the sight of those who dwell in sleep.

I am the Invisible One within the All. It is I who counsel those who are hidden, since I know the All that exists in it. I am numberless beyond everyone. I am immeasurable, ineffable, yet whenever I [wish, I shall] reveal myself of my own accord. I [am the head of] the All. I exist before the [All, and] I am the All, since I [exist in] everyone.

I am a Voice [speaking softly]. I exist [from the first. I dwell] within the Silence [that surrounds every one] of them. And [it is] the [hidden Voice] that [dwells within] me, [within the] incomprehensible, immeasurable [Thought, within the] immeasurable Silence.

I [descended to the] midst of the underworld and I shone [down upon the] darkness. It is I who poured forth the [water]. It is I who am hidden within [radiant] waters. I am the one who gradually put forth the All by my Thought. It is I who am laden with the Voice. It is through me that Gnosis comes forth. [I] dwell in the ineffable and unknowable ones. I am perception and knowledge, uttering a Voice by means of thought. [I] am the real Voice. I cry out in everyone, and
they recognize 1 it (the voice), since a seed indwells [them]. 1 I am the Thought of the Father and through 1 me proceeded [the] Voice, 1 that is, the knowledge of the everlasting things. I 20 exist as Thought for the [All] – being joined 1 to the unknowable and incomprehensible Thought – 1 I revealed myself – yes, I – among 1 all those who recognize me. For it is I 1 who am joined with everyone by virtue of 25 the hidden Thought and an exalted <Voice>, even a Voice from 1 the invisible Thought. And it is immeasurable, 1 since it dwells in the Immeasurable One. It is a mystery; 1 it is [unrestrainable] 30 by [the Incomprehensible One]. It is invisible 1 [to all those who are] visible 1 in the All. [It is a Light] dwelling in 1 Light.

It is we [also who] alone [have separated] 1 [from the] visible [world] 35 since we [are saved by the] 1 hidden [wisdom by means of the] 37 ineffable, immeasurable [Voice]. And he who is 1 hidden within us pays the tributes of his fruit 1 to the Water of Life.

Then 1 the Son who is perfect in every respect – that is, 5 the Word who originated through that 1 Voice; who proceeded from the height; who 1 has within him the Name; who is 1 a Light – he (the Son) revealed the everlasting things and 1 all the unknowns were known. 10 And those things difficult to interpret 1 and secret, he revealed, and 1 as for those who dwell in Silence with the First 1 Thought, he preached to them. And 1 he revealed himself to those who dwell in darkness, and 15 he showed himself to those who dwell in the abyss, 1 and to those who dwell in the hidden treasuries he told 1 ineffable mysteries, 1 and he taught unrepeatable doctrines 1 to all those who became Sons of 20 the Light.

Now the Voice that originated 1 from my Thought exists as three 1 permanences: the Father, the Mother, the Son. Existing 1 perceptibly as Speech, it (Voice) has 1 within it a Word endowed with 25 every <glory>, and it has 1 three masculinities, three powers, 1 and three names. They exist in the 1 manner of Three □ □ □ – which are quadrangels – 1 secretly within a silence 30 of the Ineffable One.

[It is he] alone who came to be, 1 that [is, the Christ. And] as for me I anointed him 1 as the glory [of the] Invisible [Spirit] with 1 [goodness]. Now [the Three] I established 1 [alone in] eternal [glory] over 35 [the Aeons in the] Living [Water], that 1 [is, the glory that surrounds him] 38 who first came forth to the Light 1 of those exalted Aeons, and it is in glorious 1 Light that he firmly perseveres. And [he] 1 stood in his own Light 5 that surrounds him, that is, the Eye of the Light 1 that gloriously shines on me. 1 He perpetuated the Father of all <the> Aeons, who am
I, the Thought of the Father, Protennoia, that is, Barbelo, the [perfect] Glory and the [immeasurable] Invisible One who is hidden. I am the Image of the Invisible Spirit and it is through me that the All took shape, and (I am) the Mother (as well as) the Light which she appointed as Virgin, she who is called Meirothea, the incomprehensible Womb, the unrestrainable and immeasurable Voice.

Then the Perfect Son revealed himself to his Aeons who originated through him, and he revealed them and glorified them and gave them thrones and stood in the glory with which he glorified himself. They blessed the Perfect Son, the Christ, the only-begotten God. And they gave glory, saying, "He is! He is! The Son of God! The Son of God! It is he who begot! For thou hast begotten by thine own desire! Therefore [we] glorify thee: ma mō ḍō ḍō eia ei on ei! The [Aeon] of [Aeons! The] Aeon which he gave!"

Then, moreover, the [God who was begotten] gave them (the Aeons) a power of [life on which they might rely] and [he] established [them]. The first Aeon, he established [over the first]: Armedon, Nousanios, Armozel; the second he established [over the second Aeon]: Phaionios, Ainios, Oroiael; the third over the third Aeon: Mellephaneus, Loios, Daveithai; the fourth over the fourth: Mousanios, Amethes, Eleleth. Now those Aeons were begotten by the God who was begotten — the Christ — and these Aeons received as well as gave glory. They were the first to appear, exalted in their thought, and each Aeon gave myriads of glories within great untraceable lights and they all together blessed the Perfect Son, the God who was begotten.

Then there came forth a word from the great Light Eleleth and said, "I am King! Who belongs to Chaos and who belongs to the underworld?" And at that instant his Light appeared radiant, endowed with the Epinoia. The Powers of the Powers did not entreat him and likewise immediately there appeared the great Demon who rules over the lowest part of the underworld and Chaos. He has neither form nor perfection, but on the contrary possesses the form of the glory of those begotten in the darkness. Now he is called "Sa-klas," that is, "Samael," "Yaltabaoth," he who had taken power; who had snatched it away from the innocent one (Sophia); who had earlier overpowered her who is the Light's Epinoia (Sophia) who had descended, her from whom he (Yaltabaoth) had come forth originally.
Now when the 1 Epinoia of the [Light] realized 1 that [he (Yalta-baoth)] had begged him (the Light), 1 for another [order, even though he was lower] than she, she said, 35 "Grant [me another order so that] you may become for me 1 [a dwelling place lest I dwell] in disorder 1 [forever.]" And the order of the] entire house of 40 glory [was agreed] upon her 1 word. A blessing was brought for 1 her and the higher order released it 1 to her.

And the great Demon 5 began to produce 1 aeons in the likeness of the real Aeons, 1 except that he produced them out of his own power. 1

Then I too revealed 1 my Voice secretly, 10 saying, "Cease! Desist, 1 (you) who tread on matter; for behold 1 I am coming down to the world 1 of mortals for the sake of my portion that was in 1 that place from the time when 15 the innocent Sophia was conquered, she who 1 descended, so that I might thwart 1 their aim which the one revealed 1 by her appoints." 1 And all were disturbed, 20 each one who dwells 1 in the house of the ignorant light, 1 and the abyss trembled. And 1 the Archigenetor of ignorance 1 reigned over Chaos and the underworld and 25 produced a man in my likeness. But he neither 1 knew that that one would become 1 for him a sentence of dissolution nor 1 does he recognize the power in 1 him.

But now I have come down 30 and reached down to Chaos. And 1 I was [with] my own who 1 were in that place. [I am hidden] within 1 them, empowering [them and] giving 1 them shape. And [from the first day] until 35 the day [when I will grant mighty power] 1 to those who [are mine, I will reveal myself to] 1 those who have [heard my mysteries], 41 that is, the [Sons] of [the] Light.

I 1 am their Father and I shall tell you a 1 mystery, ineffable and indivulgeable 1 by [any] mouth: Every bond 5 I loosed from you, and the 1 chains of the Demons of the underworld, I broke, 1 these things which are bound on my members, restraining them. And 1 the high walls of darkness I overthrew, 1 and the secure gates of 10 those pitiless ones I broke, and I smashed 1 their bars. And the evil Force and 1 the one who beats you, and the one who hinders 1 you, and the Tyrant, and the Adversary, 1 and the one who is King, and the present Enemy, 15 indeed all these I explained to those 1 who are mine, who are the Sons of the light, 1 in order that they might nullify them all 1 and be saved from all those bonds 1 and enter into the place where they were at 20 first.

I am the first one who descended 1 on account of my portion which remains, that is, 1 the Spirit that (now) dwells in the soul, (but) which originated 1 from the Water of Life and out 1 of the immersion of the
mysteries, and I spoke, 25 I together with the Archons and Authorities. 1 For I had gone down below their 1 language and I spoke my mysteries to 1 my own — a hidden mystery — and 1 the bonds and eternal oblivion were nullified. 30 And I bore fruit in them, that 1 is, the Thought of the unchanging Aeon, and 1 my house, and their [Father]. And I went 1 down [to those who were mine] from the first and 1 I [reached them and broke] the first strands 35 that [enslaved them]. Then 1 everyone [of those] within me shone, and 42 I prepared [a pattern] for those ineffable Lights that are 1 within me. Amen. 1

The Discourse of Protennoia: [One] 1

I am the Voice that appeared through 5 my Thought, for I am “He who is syzygetic,” 1 since I am called “the Thought of the Invisible One.” 1 Since I am called “the unchanging Speech,” 1 I am called “She who is syzygetic.”

I am a single 1 one (fem.) since I am undefiled. I am the Mother [of] 10 the Voice, speaking in many ways, completing 1 the All. It is in me that knowledge dwells, 1 the knowledge of <things> everlasting. It is I [who] 1 speak within every creature and I was known 1 by the All. It is I who lift up 15 the Speech of the Voice to the ears of those who 1 have known me, that is, the Sons of the Light. 1

Now I have come the second time in the likeness 1 of a female and have spoken with them. And 1 I shall tell them of the coming end of the Aeon 20 and teach them of the beginning of the Aeon 1 to come, the one without change, 1 the one in which our appearance will be changed. 1 We shall be purified within those Aeons from which I 1 revealed myself in the Thought 25 of the likeness of my masculinity. I settled 1 among those who are worthy in the Thought of my 1 changeless Aeon.

For I shall tell you a 1 mystery [of] this particular Aeon and 1 tell you about the forces that are in it. 30 The birth beckons: [hour] begets 1 hour, [day begets day]. The months 1 made known the [month. Time] has [gone round] 1 succeeding [time]. This particular Aeon 43 was completed in [this] fashion, and it was estimated, and 1 it (was) short, for it was a finger that released a 1 finger and a joint that was separated from 1 a joint. Then when the great Authorities knew 5 that the time of fulfillment had appeared — 1 just as in the pangs of the parturient it (the time) had drawn near, 1 so also had 1 the destruction approached — all together the elements 1 trembled, and the foundations of the underworld and the ceilings 10 of Chaos shook and a great fire shone 1 within
their midst, and the rocks and the earth were shaken like a reed shaken by the wind. And the lots of Fate and those who apportion the domiciles were greatly disturbed over a great thunder. And the thrones of the Powers were disturbed since they were overturned, and their King was afraid. And those who pursue Fate paid their allotment of visits to the path, and they said to the Powers, “What is this disturbance and this shaking that has come upon us through a Voice belonging to the exalted Speech? And our entire habitation has been shaken, and the entire circuit of our path of ascent has met with destruction, and the path upon which we go, which takes us up to the Archigenetor of our birth, has ceased to be established for us.” Then the Powers answered, saying, “We too are at a loss about it since we did not know what was responsible for it. But arise, let us go up to the Archigenetor and ask him.” And the Powers all gathered and went up to the Archigenetor. [They said to] him, “Where is your boasting in which you boast? Did we not hear you say, ‘I am God and I am your Father and it is I who begot you and there is no other beside me’? Now behold, there has appeared a Voice belonging to that invisible Speech of [the Aeon] (and) which we know not. And we ourselves did not recognize to whom we belong, for that Voice which we listened to is foreign to us, and we do not recognize it; we did not know whence it was. It came and put fear in our midst and weakening in the members of our arms. So now let us weep and mourn most bitterly! As for the future, let us make our entire flight before we are imprisoned perforce and taken down to the bosom of the underworld. For already the slackening of our bondage has approached, and the times are cut short and the days have shortened and our time has been fulfilled, and the weeping of our destruction has approached us so that we may be taken to the place we recognize. For as for our tree from which we grew, a fruit of ignorance is what it has; and also its leaves, it is death that dwells in them, and darkness dwells under the shadow of its boughs. And it was in deceit and lust that we harvested it, this (tree) through which ignorant Chaos became for us a dwelling place. For behold, even he, the Archigenetor of our birth, about whom we boast, even he did not know this Speech.” So now, O Sons of the Thought, listen to me, to the Speech of the Mother of your mercy, for you have become worthy of the mystery hidden from (the beginning of) the Aeons, so that you might receive it. And the consummation of this [particular] Aeon [and] of the evil
life [has approached and there dawns the] beginning of the [Aeon to come] which [has no change forever].

I am androgynous. [I am Mother (and) I am] Father since [I copulate] with myself. I [copulated] with myself [and with those who love me, [and] it is through me alone that the All [stands firm]. I am the Womb [that gives shape] to the All by giving birth to the Light that [shines in] splendor. I am the Aeon to come. I am the fulfillment of the All, that is, Me[iroth]ea, the glory of the Mother. I cast [voiced] Speech into the ears of those who know me.

And I am inviting you into the exalted, perfect Light. Moreover (as for) this (Light), when you enter it you will be glorified by those [who] give glory, and those who enthrone will enthrone you. You will accept robes from those who give robes and the Baptists will baptize you and you will become gloriously glorious, the way you first were when you were <Light>.

And I hid myself in everyone and revealed [myself] within them, and every mind seeking me longed for me, for it is who gave shape to the All when it had no form. And I transformed their forms into (other) forms until the time when a form will be given to the All. It is through me that the Voice originated and it is I who put the breath within my own. And I cast into them the eternally holy Spirit and I ascended and entered my Light. [I went up] upon my branch and sat [there among the] Sons of the [holy] Light. And [I withdrew] to their dwelling place which become glorious . . . . Amen.

[On Fate: Two]

I am [the Word] who dwells in the ineffable [Voice]. I dwell in undefiled [Light] and a Thought revealed itself perceptibly through the great Speech of the Mother, although it is a male offspring that supports me as my foundation. And it (the Speech) exists from the beginning in the foundations of the All.

But there is a Light that dwells hidden in Silence and it was first to forth. Whereas she (the Mother) alone exists as Silence, I alone am the Word, ineffable, unpolluted, immeasurable, inconceivable. It (the Word) is a hidden Light, bearing a Fruit of Life, pouring forth a Living Water from the invisible, unpolluted, immeasurable Spring, that is, the un reproduceable Voice of the glory of the Mother, the glory of the offspring of God; a male Virgin by virtue of a hidden Intellect, that is, the Silence hidden from the All, being un repro-
ducible, an immeasurable Light, the source of the All, the Root of
the entire Aeon. It is the Foundation that supports every movement of
the Aeons that belong to the mighty Glory. It is the Foundation of
every foundation. It is the Breath of the Powers. It is the Eye of the
Three Permanences, which exist as Voice by virtue of Thought. And
it is a Word by virtue of Speech; it was sent to illumine those who
dwell in the [darkness].

Now behold [I will reveal] to you [my mysteries] since you are my
fellow brethren, and you shall know them all [. . .]. I [told all of
them about my mysteries] that exist in [the incomprehensible], inexpressible [Aeons]. I taught [them the mysteries] through the [Voice
that exists] within a perfect Intellect [and I] became a foundation
for the All, and [I empowered] them.

The second time I came in the [Speech] of my Voice. I gave shape to
those who [took] shape until their consummation.

The third time I revealed myself to them [in] their tents as Word
and I revealed myself in the likeness of their shape. And I wore
everyone’s garment and hid myself within them, and [they] did not know the one who empowers me. For I dwell within all the Sovereign-
ties and Powers and within the Angels and in every movement [that]
exists in all matter. And I hid myself within them until I revealed
myself to my [brethren]. And none of them (the Powers) knew me,
[although] it is I who work in them. Rather [they thought] that the
All was created [by them] since they are ignorant, not knowing [their]
root, the place in which they grew.

[I am the Light that illumines the All. I am the Light that rejoices
[in my brethren, for I came down to the world [of mortals on ac-
count of the Spirit that remains [in] that which [descended] (and) came forth [from] the innocent Sophia. [I came] and I delivered [. . .] and I [went] to which he had [formerly and I gave to him] from the Water [of Life, which strips] him of the Chaos [that is in the] uttermost [darkness] that exists [inside] the entire [abyss], that is, the thought of [the corporeal] and the psychic. All these I put on. And I stripped him of it and I put upon him a shining Light, that is, the
knowledge of the Thought of the Fatherhood.

And I delivered him to those who give robes — Yammon, Elasso,
Amenai — and they [covered] him with a robe from the robes of the
Light; and I delivered him to the Baptists and they baptized him — Micheus, Michar, Mn[enesinous] — and they immersed him in the spring
of the [Water] of Life. And I delivered him to those who enthrone —
Bariel, Nouthan, Sabenai — and they enthroned him from the throne of glory. And I delivered him to those who glorify — Arom, Elien, Phariel — and they glorified him with the glory of the Fatherhood. And those who snatch away snatched away — Kamalien. Sambo, the servants of the great holy Luminaries — and they took him into the light-place of his Fatherhood. And [he received] the Five Seals from the Light of the Mother, Protennoia, and it was granted him [to] partake of [the mystery] of knowledge, and [he became a Light] in Light.

So, now, I was dwelling in them [in the form of each] one. [The Archons] thought [that I] was their Christ. Indeed I dwell in everyone. Indeed within those in whom [I revealed myself] as Light [I eluded] the Archons. I am their beloved, [for] in that place I clothed myself as the Son of the Archigenetor, and I was like him until the end of his decree, which is the ignorance of Chaos. And among the Angels I revealed myself in their likeness, and among the Powers as if I were one of them, but among the Sons of Man as if I were a Son of Man, even though I am Father of everyone.

I hid myself within them all until I revealed myself among my members, which are mine, and I taught them about the ineffable ordinances, and (about) the brethren. But they are inexpressible to every Sovereignty and every ruling Power except to the Sons of the Light alone, that is, the ordinances of the Father. These are the glories that are higher than every glory, that is, [the Five] Seals complete by virtue of Intellect. He who possesses the Five Seals of these particular names has stripped off the garments of ignorance and put on a shining Light. And nothing will appear to him that belongs to the Powers of the Archons. Within those of this sort darkness will dissolve and ignorance will die. And the thought of the creature which [is scattered] will present a single appearance and [dark Chaos] will dissolve and incomprehensible within the [...] until I reveal myself [to all my fellow brethren] and until I gather [together] all [my fellow] brethren within my [eternal kingdom]. And I proclaimed to them the ineffable [Five Seals in order that I might abide in them and they also might abide in me.

As for me, I put on Jesus. I bore him from the cursed wood, and established him in the dwelling places of his Father. And those who watch over their dwelling places did not recognize me. For I, I am unrestrainable together with my Seed, and my Seed, which is mine, I shall [place] into the Holy Light within an incomprehensible Silence. Amen.
The Discourse of the Appearance: Three
Trimorphic Protennoia, in three parts
A Sacred Scripture written by the Father
with perfect Knowledge
THE GOSPEL OF MARY (BG 8502,1)

Introduced by
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The extant text of The Gospel of Mary can easily be divided into two parts. The first section (7,1-9,24) describes the dialogue between the (risen) Savior and the disciples. He answers their questions concerning matter and sin. Relying on an exegesis of Romans 7, as Anne Pasquier has shown, the Savior argues, in effect, that sin is not a moral category, but a cosmological one; it is due to the improper mixing of the material and the spiritual. In the end all things will be resolved into their proper root. After finishing his discourse, the Savior gives them a final greeting, admonishes them to beware of any who may try to lead them astray and commissions them to go and preach the gospel of the kingdom. After he departs, however, the disciples are grieved and in considerable doubt and consternation. Mary Magdalene comforts them and turns their hearts toward the Good and a consideration of the Savior’s words.

The second section of the text (10,1-23; 15,1-19,2) contains a description by Mary of special revelation given to her by the Savior. At Peter’s request, she tells the disciples about things that were hidden from them. The basis for her knowledge is a vision of the Lord and a private dialogue with him. Unfortunately four pages of the text are missing here so that only the beginning and end of Mary’s revelation are extant.

The revelation is in the form of a dialogue. The first question Mary asks the Savior is how one sees a vision. The Savior replies that the soul sees through the mind which is between the soul and the spirit. At this point the text breaks off. When the text resumes at 15,1, Mary is in the midst of describing the Savior’s revelation concerning the rise of the soul past the four powers. The four powers are most probably to be identified as essential expressions of the four material elements. The enlightened soul, now free of their bonds, rises past the four powers, overpowering them with her gnosis, and attains eternal, silent rest.

After Mary finishes recounting her vision to the disciples, Andrew and then Peter challenge her on two grounds. First of all, Andrew says, these teachings are strange. Secondly, Peter questions, would the Savior really have told such things to a woman and kept them from the male disciples. Levi admonishes Peter for contending with the woman as against the adversaries and acknowledges that
the Savior loved her more than the other disciples. He entreats them to be ashamed, to put on the perfect man, and to go forth and preach as the Savior had instructed them to do. They immediately go forth to preach and the text ends.

The confrontation of Mary with Peter, a scenario also found in *The Gospel of Thomas*, *Pistis Sophia*, and *The Gospel of the Egyptians*, reflects some of the tensions in second-century Christianity. Peter and Andrew represent orthodox positions that deny the validity of esoteric revelation and reject the authority of women to teach. *The Gospel of Mary* attacks both of these positions head-on through its portrayal of Mary Magdalene. She is the Savior's beloved, possessed of knowledge and teaching superior to that of the public apostolic tradition. Her superiority is based on vision and private revelation and is demonstrated in her capacity to strengthen the wavering disciples and turn them toward the Good.

The text belongs to the genre of the gnostic dialogue. It has, however, also been classified as an apocalypse due to several characteristics it shares with other texts of that genre: revelation dialogue, vision, an abbreviated cosmogony, a description of otherworldly regions and the rise of the soul (though there is no heavenly journey as such), final instructions, and a short narrative conclusion. The difficulty in determining genre is due in part to the fact that the text has undergone secondary redaction. Most scholars agree that the two parts of the text described above were originally separate pieces (oral or written) that were artificially combined to form the present whole. The role of Mary at the end of the first section and the altercation among the disciples at the end provide the narrative connection.

*The Gospel of Mary* was originally written in Greek some time in the second century. Unfortunately the two extant copies of *The Gospel of Mary* are extremely fragmentary. The earliest text comprises only a single, fragmentary leaf written in Greek, dated to the early third century (P. Rylands III 463 [22:16,1-19,4]). A longer portion of the text is extant in an early fifth-century Coptic codex (P. Berolinensis 8502,1), though considerable portions of the text are missing there too. Of eighteen pages, only eight are extant (7-10 and 15-19,5). Though the text of the Greek fragment varies considerably from the Coptic version, it parallels the Coptic pages 17,5-21 and 18,5-19,5 and hence does not provide any new material.

THE GOSPEL OF MARY

BG 7, 1-19, 5

[...] (pp. 1-6 missing) will matter then 1  be [destroyed] or not?" The Savior said, 1  "All natures, all formations, all creatures 1  exist in and with one another, 5  and they will be resolved again into 1  their own roots. For the 1  nature of matter is resolved into the (roots) of 1  its nature alone. He who has 1  ears to hear, let him hear." 10

Peter said to him, "Since you have 1  explained everything to us, tell
us this also: "What is the sin of the world?" The Savior said, "There is no sin, but it is you who make sin when you do the things that are like the nature of adultery, which is called 'sin.' That is why the Good came into your midst, to the (essence) of every nature, in order to restore it to its root." Then he continued and said, "That is why you [become sick] and die, for [... of the one who [... He who] understands, let him understand. [Matter gave birth to] a passion that has no equal, which proceeded from (something) contrary to nature. Then there arise a disturbance in the whole body. That is why I said to you, 'Be of good courage,' and if you are discouraged (be) encouraged in the presence of the different forms of nature. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'"

When the blessed one had said this, he greeted them all, saying, "Peace be with you. Receive my peace to yourselves. Beware that no one lead you astray, saying, 'Lo here!' or 'Lo there!' For the Son of Man is within you. Follow after him! Those who seek him will find him. Go then and preach the gospel of the kingdom. Do not lay down any rules beyond what I appointed for you, and do not give a law like the lawgiver lest you be constrained by it." When he had said this, he departed.

But they were grieved. They wept greatly, saying, "How shall we go to the gentiles and preach the gospel of the kingdom of the Son of Man? If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?" Then Mary stood up, greeted them all, and said to her brethren, "Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for his grace will be entirely with you and will protect you. But rather let us praise his greatness, for he has prepared us and made us into men." When Mary said this, she turned their hearts to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the Savior.

Peter said to Mary, "Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of women. Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember — which you know (but) we do not, nor have we heard them." Mary answered and said, "What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you." And she began to speak to them these words: "I," she said, "I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision.' He answered and said to me, 'Blessed are you, that you did not waver at the sight of me. For where the mind is, there is the treasure.' I said to him, 'Lord, now does he who sees the vision see it through the soul or through the spirit?' The Savior answered and said, 'He does not see through the soul nor
through the spirit, but the mind which [is] between the two — that is [what] sees the vision and it is [. . .].’ (pp. 11-14 missing)

‘[. . .] 15 it. And desire that, I ‘I did not see you descending, but now I see you ascending. Why do you lie, since you belong to [me]?’ The soul answered and said, ‘I saw you. You did not see me nor recognize me. I served you as a garment, and you did not know me.’ When it had said this, it went away rejoicing greatly.

‘Again it came to the third power, which is called ignorance. [It (the power)] questioned the soul saying, ‘Where are you going? In wickedness are you bound. But you are bound; do not judge!’ And the soul said, ‘why do you judge me although I have not judged? I was bound though I have not bound. I was not recognized. But I have recognized that the All is being dissolved, both the earthly (things) and the heavenly.’

When the soul had overcome the third power, it went upwards and saw the fourth power, (which) took seven forms. The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth is the excitement of death, the fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the foolish wisdom of flesh, the seventh is the wrathful wisdom. These are the seven [powers] of wrath. They ask the soul, ‘Whence do you come, slayer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?’ The soul answered and said, ‘What binds me has been slain, and what surrounds me has been overcome, and my desire has been ended, and ignorance has died. In a [world] I was released from a world, [and] in a type from a heavenly type, and (from) the fetter of oblivion which is transient. From this time on will I attain to the rest of the time, of the season, of the aeon, in silence.’

When Mary had said this, she fell silent, since it was to this point that the Savior had spoken with her. But Andrew answered and said to the brethren, ‘Say what you (wish to) say about what she has said. I at least do not believe that the Savior said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas.’ Peter answered and spoke concerning these same things. He questioned them about the Savior: ‘Did he really speak with a woman without our knowledge (and) not openly? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?’

Then Mary wept and said to Peter, ‘My brother Peter, what do you think? Do you think that I thought this up myself in my heart, or that I am lying about the Savior?’ Levi answered and said to Peter, ‘Peter, you have always been hot-tempered. Now I see you contend-
ing against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why he loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect man and acquire him for ourselves as he commanded us, and preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the Savior said.” When and they began to go forth to proclaim and to preach.

[The] Gospel according to Mary
The Act of Peter is a narrative about how the virginity of Peter's daughter was preserved and the soul of one Ptolemy saved, by divine intervention exercised through Peter. The setting of Act Pet. is a Sunday (the place is not mentioned; cf. discussion below), when, it appears, it was customary for Peter to conduct his healing ministry. A challenge by one of the bystanders leads Peter to employ the power of God to heal his daughter of paralysis, which healing he immediately reverses (128,7-131,9). Peter's narrative, which constitutes most of the remainder of Act Pet., begins with an explanation of how his daughter came to be paralyzed. When she had grown to sexual maturity, the girl was so attractive that a rich man named Ptolemy burned with desire to marry her. Her mother refused permission, whereupon Ptolemy abducted her. If the operative law was Jewish, Ptolemy's purpose may well have been to force the girl's parents to allow him to marry her (see Dt 22:28-29). Peter's prayers caused her to be paralyzed before Ptolemy could have intercourse with her, and hence her virginity was preserved (131,12-135,17). Ptolemy went blind with grief, but a vision spared him from suicide, revealed his guilt, and sent him to Peter, where his sight was restored and his soul was made to see also (135,17-138,10). Thereafter he lived an exemplary life and gave Peter and his daughter a parcel of land when he died. This Peter sold and gave the proceeds to the poor (138,12-139,17). Peter draws the moral that God cares for his own, and the whole account ends with Peter distributing bread to the crowd and retiring to his home.

Although the physical setting is not mentioned in the text, it is reasonable to think of Jerusalem, since Peter's home is spoken of (141,6), where he lives with his wife and daughter (135,1-6). Another possibility is Rome, but there is a tradition in The Acts of Peter, mentioned below, that he goes alone to Rome. In addition, as noted above, the operative law appears to be Jewish.

The Act of Peter probably was part of the otherwise lost beginning third of a collection of apocryphal narratives known as The Acts of Peter. There is extensive conceptual and literary agreement between The Act of Peter and the remaining Acts of Peter. Whether there is a close enough relationship between The Act of Peter and the Nag Hammadi Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles (VI,1) to make it likely that the latter was also part of The Acts of Peter remains to be seen.

Conceptually, the emphasis of The Act of Peter is moderately encratite. Marriage itself is not denounced (note that Peter was married and still living with his wife). What is denounced is Ptolemy's lust, which leads him to attempt to deprive
a Christian maiden of her virginity by force (137,1-11). Thus, the encratism in
this tractate consists in its advocacy of rigorous sexual self-control, which was
a view common among Christians in the second century. There is no doubt, how­
ever, that the lack of any statement about the meaning of the narrative would
have allowed it to be interpreted in a more extreme sense.

It has been suggested that the reason for the inclusion of The Act of Peter in
a codex containing three explicitly gnostic tractates is that the scribe needed to
fill up the pages after copying the first three tractates, and thus he was attracted
to The Act of Peter by its appropriate length and the encratite tendencies in it.
Considering the large amount of explicitly gnostic writing available, one wonders
why he chose a work only marginally related. The editor might have been in­
fluenced by the immediately preceding tractate, The Sophia of Jesus Christ,
which has in its conclusion, when Christ disappears from the disciples, the state­
ment that they “began to preach the Gospel of God, the eternal Father”
(129,5-9). He might have thought that an account of apostolic activity would be
appropriate. But since many similar accounts would also have been circulating,
there may be a further reason for the choice of this particular tractate.

The Act of Peter may have been chosen because of the rich possibilities for
allegorization that it would have presented to Gnostics. Ptolemy could have rep­
resented the soul, whose attraction to the things of the world (represented by the
beauty of Peter’s daughter) leads to ignorance (represented by grief and blind­
ness), and would have led to death except for the coming of the light of true
knowledge (in Act Pet., the vision of light and the voice of Christ
[136,17-137,17]), which removes blindness (138,7-10). The paralysis of the
daughter could have represented the power of divine knowledge over the powers
of this world; and, of course, the daughter could also have been seen as a type
of the fallen Sophia. (For related gnostic views in BG, cf. Soph. Jes. Chr. [BG,3]
103,10-106,9; 117,13-126,16). It may thus have been the deeper meanings seen
in this text that attracted the gnostic compiler to it and led him to use it in the
codex.

Act Pt. are dated toward the end of the second century. Hence Act Pet. would
have been extant by that time, although it might well have had an earlier, in­
dependent existence.

THE ACT OF PETER

BG 128, 1-141, 7

Now on the first (day) of the week, 1 which is the Lord’s day, 1 a
crowd gathered and 1 brought to Peter 5 many who were 1 sick, in order
that he might 1 heal them. And a person 1 from the crowd made bold 1 to say to Peter, 10 “Peter, behold, in 1 our presence you have caused
many 1 blind to see, and you have 1 caused the deaf to hear, 1 and you
have caused the lame to 15 walk. And you have helped 1 the weak and
have given them 1 strength. But your 1 virgin daughter, who 1 has grown
up to be beautiful and who has believed in the name of God, why have you not helped her? For behold, one side of her is completely paralyzed and she lies crippled there in the corner. Those whom you have healed are seen (about us); but your daughter you have neglected.

Then Peter smiled and said to him, "My son, it is apparent to God alone why her body is not healthy. Know, then, that God was not weak or unable to give his gift to my daughter. But so that your soul may be persuaded and those who are here may have more faith."

Then he looked at his daughter and said to her, "Arise from your place! Let nobody help you except Jesus alone, and walk restored in the presence of all these (people)! Come to me!" And she arose and went over to him. The crowd rejoiced on account of what happened. Peter said to them, "Behold, your hearts have been persuaded that God is not powerless regarding anything we ask of him." Then they rejoiced even more and praised God.

Peter said to his daughter, "Go to your place, sit down, and become an invalid again. For this is beneficial for you and me." The girl went back again, sat down in her place, and became again as she was before. The whole crowd wept and begged Peter to make her healthy. Peter said to them, "As the Lord lives, this is beneficial for her and me. For on the day she was born to me I saw a vision and the Lord said to me, 'Peter, there has been born to you today a great trial. For this (daughter) will wound many souls if her body remains healthy.' But I thought the vision was mocking me.

"When the girl became ten years old, many were tempted by her. And a man rich in property, Ptolemy, after he had seen the girl bathing with her mother, sent for her so that he might take her for his wife. Her mother was not persuaded. He sent for her many times. He could not cease [...]. (pp. 133-34 are lost. The sense of these pages can be recovered from the context with the aid of a brief notice by Augustine in his treatise against Adimantus, in which he refers to an apocryphal work "about the daughter of Peter himself who became paralysed through the prayers of her father." It appears, then, that Ptolemy, in his passionate desire, abducted the girl and was about to have intercourse with her by force when she was suddenly paralysed by a divine act that had been sought by Peter in prayer.)"
her body, from her toes to her head, paralyzed and withered. We picked her up, praising the Lord who had saved his servant from defilement, [and] pollution, and [destruction]. This is the cause of [the fact] that the girl remains thus to this day.

"Now then, it is fitting for you to know the (subsequent) deeds of Ptolemy. He was smitten in his heart and grieved night and day on account of what happened to him. And because of (the) many tears he shed he became blind. He intended to go and hang himself. And behold in the ninth hour of that day, and when he was alone in his bedroom, saw a great light shining in the whole house, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Ptolemy, God did not give his vessels for corruption and pollution. But it was necessary for you, since you believed in me, that you not defile my virgin, whom you should have recognized as your sister, since I have become one Spirit for you both. But arise and go quickly to the house of Peter the apostle and you will see my glory. He will explain the matter to you.'

"And Ptolemy did not hesitate. He commanded his men-servants to lead him and to bring him to me. And when he had come to me he narrated everything that had happened to him in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Then he saw with the eyes of his flesh and the eyes of his soul. And many hoped in Christ. He did good things for them and he gave them the gift of God.

Afterwards Ptolemy died. He departed from life and went to his Lord. And [when he made] his will, he wrote in a piece of land in the name of my daughter, since because of her he believed in God and was saved. I myself took care of the administration entrusted to me most carefully. I sold the land. And God alone knows, neither I, nor my daughter, kept anything back from the price of the land. But I sent the entire sum of money to the poor.

"Know, then, O servant of Christ Jesus, that God watches over those who are his and he prepares what is good for each one. But we think that God has forgotten us. Now then, brothers, let us be penitent and watchful, and pray. And the goodness of God will look down upon us — and we wait for it." And [all] other teachings Peter spoke in the presence of them all. Praising the name of the Lord Christ, he gave them all bread. When he had distributed it, he arose and went into his house.

The Act of Peter
Afterword

THE MODERN RELEVANCE OF GNOSTICISM

by

RICHARD SMITH

“The Gnostics,” Edward Gibbon informed the late eighteenth century, “were distinguished as the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy of the Christian name.” Why would Gibbon have told such a mischievous lie? There is nothing in the primary sources available to him on which to base his claim. Gibbon, nevertheless, in that notorious fifteenth chapter of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, avoids the old hostilities. In his witty, malicious — today we might add revisionist — style, Gibbon portrays the Gnostics with such impartiality that his chapter becomes, if not an advertisement for heresy, then at least a subversion of orthodoxy. His catty remarks on the early Christian church were later bowdlerized, yet the most unkind words he has for the Gnostics is to describe their “vain science” as “sublime but obscure.” Hardly the rascals of tradition, we can imagine Gibbon’s Gnostics gracing one of Mme Geoffrin’s salons.

Other philosophes might have welcomed their presence as well, for, as part of the Enlightenment attack on Christianity, the ancient dualist heretics of the early church found their cause promoted. The method, or perhaps the battle order (Gibbon’s Memoirs speak of shooting the shaft and sounding the alarm), was revealed by Gibbon when he fondly praised that patron saint of the Enlightenment, Pierre Bayle. Bayle “balances the false religions in his sceptical scales, til the opposite quantities annihilate each other.” Bayle’s Historical and Critical Dictionary had no entry on Gnostics or Gnosticism (a brand new word in his day), but gathered all of the old dualists together under the heading of Manichaeans. The Manichaean movement had been the final flourish of Gnosticism, and had survived through various geographical wanderings until its flare up in southern France in the Middle Ages when it was eliminated by a crusade. Until the eighteenth century revived an interest in the older sects now called gnostic, the term Manichaean was used for all dualist heresies.
For Voltaire, another of Bayle's devotees, the catchword was also Manichaean. *Candide* depicts the adventures of a few silly optimists in a wicked world; a world in which Christian priests are among the most villainous troublemakers. Peter Gay has even described the book as "a declaration of war on Christianity." Yet in the midst of all the chaos Voltaire includes one sympathetic character; a wandering scholar named Martin who introduces himself to Candide as "a Manichaean." When Candide protests that there are no more Manichaeans in the world, Martin simply says, "I cannot think any other way. I think that God has abandoned this globe, or rather this globule, to some maleficent being." The events of the novel confirm Martin's assessment. Bayle had said that the gnostic belief in several eternal beings, some good, some bad, in perpetual conflict, "is not so unlikely" to "men who think and reason." Voltaire says, in his own *Philosophical Dictionary* discussing the Gnostics and Manichaeans, "to have imagined two all-powerful beings fighting each other" is not a "trivial" notion. He slyly describes Basilides' myth of "the creation of the world by god's lowest angels, and that these, not being skillful, arranged matters as we see them." In his story, *Plato's Dream*, Voltaire tells a nightmarish version of creation by an incompetent genie called Demogorgon. Dualist stories seem to have appealed to Voltaire's own sense of conflict. There is in his writings, as Roland Barthes puts it, "a kind of Manichaean struggle between stupidity and intelligence." Or, as David Hume summed up the opposition in one breath, "Stupidity, Christianity, and Ignorance."

The Enlightenment writers created a sympathetic picture of the Gnostics because heterodoxy suited their anti-orthodoxy. They emphasized the dualist critique of the world, but ignored the dualist promise of transcendent escape. The *philosophes* thus created a version of the Gnostics that was, like themselves, secular. It is because we are still the heirs of that secular agenda that an assessment of any modern relevance of Gnosticism properly begins in the eighteenth century. There was, certainly, an interest in unorthodox, esoteric, and even occult matters in earlier centuries. In the Renaissance, for example, there was something of the spirit of exploration and conquest in such studies. Disparate traditions, hermetic and cabalistic, were appropriated and harmonized with Christianity. Ficino, Agrippa, Dee, and Bruno all considered themselves Christians. They were not at all, moreover, interested in the ancient Gnostics. The eighteenth-century *philosophes* regarded Gnosticism as a counter-tradition and wielded it as a weapon in their outflanking tactics to overthrow the received tradition.
That the "candid but rational inquiry" (the words with which Gibbon opens his chapter on Christianity) was often a relativist pose was mostly lost on following generations. The irony was ignored and Reason itself was regarded as absolutist and a threat to the human imagination. William Blake named the enemy in his poem Milton:

... this Newtonian Phantasm
This Voltaire & Rousseau: this Hume & Gibbon
... the Reasoning Power in Man
This is a false Body: an Incrustation over my Immortal Spirit; a Selfhood, which must be put off & annihilated alway . . .
I come in Self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration
To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour
To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration
To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albion's covering
To take off his filthy garments, & clothe him with Imagination

This is a new use of dualist language. For Blake, salvation was the free expression of his own visionary imagination. Only a few months before his death, he wrote to a friend that he was "very near the gates of death . . . but not in spirit and life, not in the real man, the imagination, which liveth for ever. In that I am stronger and stronger, as this foolish body decays." Throughout his life, Blake expressed this vision in poetic myths with a strong gnostic character. The evil demiurge of these poems he calls Urizen, a polysemous figure who suggests so much more than the creator of the physical world, Jehovah. He is also, as "prince of Light," Satan and the "Enlightenment" as his name (your Reason) signifies. He is evil for Blake because his creation limits (Horizen, his name implies, too) and his primary symbol is "the golden compasses." Like the bearded figure in Blake's famous print "The Ancient of Days," Urizen leans out of eternity and reaches down into the dark void with his compasses to measure, to divide, and to imprison. In The Four Zoas Blake describes the creation in images that echo and parody, like some gnostic texts, both Genesis and Plato's Timaeus:

... First the Architect divine his plan
Unfolds, The wondrous scaffold reared all round the infinite
Quadrangular the building rose the heavens squared by a line . . .
A wondrous golden Building; many a window many a door
And many a division let in & out into the vast unknown
Cubed in window square immoveable, within its walls & cielings
The heavens were closed and spirits mourn'd their bondage night and day

When he finishes his creation Urizen, like Yaldabaoth, claims, "Am I not God. Who is Equal to me."
Then he began to sow the seed he girded round his loins
With a bright girdle & his skirt filld with immortal souls
Howling & Wailing fly the souls from Urizen's strong hand

This evil creator depicted by Blake in his later poems helps remove some of the ambiguity from the question he had posed in "The Tyger": "What immortal hand or eye, / Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?" Where William Blake read or heard about the Gnostics is not exactly clear, but some of his views certainly echo them consciously. With the Gnostics he separates the true God from nature, and regards the creator of the natural universe as evil. Crabb Robinson, a friend of Wordsworth, talked with Blake and kept a diary. Discussing Wordsworth's "eloquent descriptions of Nature," Blake told Robinson that Wordsworth didn't believe in God, "For Nature is the work of the Devil." When Robinson pointed out the creation of the earth by God in Genesis, Blake "repeated the doctrine of the Gnostics with sufficient consistency" that his interviewer was silenced.

Harold Bloom, a contemporary interpreter of the Romantic tradition, compares Blake's Tyger with Melville's Moby Dick. Both beasts represent nature, and "nature is death." Nature "painted like a harlot," Melville wrote, "God's great, unflattering laureate, Nature." The material universe is, for Ahab, "but a mask," a cosmetic behind which lies death, like a white shroud, like the albino whale. In a short poem he called "Fragments of a Lost Gnostic Poem," Melville wrote "Matter in end will never abate / His ancient brutal claim." Two years before the publication of Moby Dick, Herman Melville purchased a copy of Pierre Bayle's old Dictionary. What he read there (and elsewhere) found its way into the novel, and whether Ahab shakes his angry harpoon at a monstrous creature or a malicious gnostic creator is not distinct. "An inscrutable malice," Ahab says, "is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man." Ishmael, attempting to explain this fury, compares Ahab's feelings to those of a sect of ancient Gnostics. These were the Ophites, a group that today's scholarship calls the Sethians, associated with several of our Nag Hammadi texts. Ahab, says Ishmael, deliriously transferred the idea of "that intangible malignity which has been from the beginning ... which the ancient Ophites of the east reverenced ... to the abhorred white whale." In the final pages of the book Ahab flings an accusation at the creator that conjures Yaldabaoth's ignorance of his own mother.
Thou knowest not how came ye, hence callest thyself unbegotten: certainly knowest not thy beginning, hence callest thyself unbegun. I know that of me, which thou knowest not of thyself, oh, thou omnipotent. There is some unsuffusing thing beyond thee, thou clear spirit, to whom all thy eternity is but time, all thy creativeness mechanical.

In these passages from Blake and Melville, the physical world is a barrier. Romantic writers regard that barrier with feelings from discomfort to open hostility. The present collection of texts from Nag Hammadi shows us that what we call Gnosticism can range between a hierarchical monism to strict dualism. In a similar manner texts from the Romantic tradition depict, with varying degrees of conflict, a drama of separation and reintegration. The “fall into Division,” Blake wrote, “and Resurrection to Unity.” Salvation consists in what Harold Bloom describes as “the post-Enlightenment passion for Genius and the Sublime.” “The power of the mind,” as Coleridge had put it, “over the universe of death.” Scholars have found examples of “Gnosticism” in the writings of Baudelaire, Rimbaud, the early Flaubert (in The Temptation of Saint Antony, a book much inspired by his reading of Pierre Bayle), the French Symbolists, the German Idealists, the American Transcendentalists, Carlyle, and so on. “Indeed,” writes Bloom, “it could be argued that a form of Gnosticism is endemic in Romantic tradition.” His primary example of this gnostic tendency is W.B. Yeats. Yeat’s lyrics internalize the dualism and dramatize a conflict between various aspects of the self. In such poems as “A Dialogue of Self and Soul,” the two speakers, Bloom argues, “are precisely the pneuma and the psyche of Gnostic formulation. The place of the Gnostic alien or transmundane true God in Yeats is taken by the imagination, which in Yeats is closer to Gnostic transcendence than it is to the Romantic Sublime.’’

If but imagination scorn the earth
And intellect its wandering
To this and that and t’other thing,
Deliver from the crime of death and birth.

This internalized antithetical conflict is more boldly stated in “Sailing to Byzantium”:

Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.
Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing.
Yeats's strange and famous poem "The Second Coming" historicizes this antithesis and envisions the approach of a world spirit signaling a new, post-Christian age.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight . . .
... but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

How are we to read these difficult images? Is Yeats afraid, or simply struck with wonder? Have the twenty Christian centuries been a nightmare? And how much can we make of the antithesis between "know" and "sleep"? A lot. The rough beast's slumber recalls "Urizen laid in a stony sleep." Yeats, after all, had edited Blake's poems for publication. The turning of the ages was recorded by Yeats, acting as amanuensis to his wife who was in mediumistic trance, and published as A Vision. The anti-Christian tone is not unrelated to his involvement in various occult groups while he lived in London and to his membership in The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which enthusiastically circulated exotic religious writings including gnostic texts.

What Yeats and the Golden Dawn read as "gnostic" were often greco-roman magical texts. He also read gnostic sources in the books published by his long time acquaintance G.R.S. Mead. Mead devoted his life to publishing English translations of the gnostic sources available at the turn of the century. In books like Fragments of a Faith Forgotten he promoted an interest in the subject among nonscholarly readers. Mead and Yeats had met as members of the esoteric section of the Theosophical Society, which gathered at the London flat of H.P. Blavatsky in the 1880s.

It was Madame Blavatsky who first claimed the Gnostics as precursors for the occult movement. In her program to divide speculative learning into esoteric and exoteric, truth and religion, the Gnostics were an obvious opposition to what she called "Churchianity." She absorbed the Gnostics, in her universal free-associative style, into a great occult synthesis:
Ialdabaoth, the creator of the material world, was made to inhabit the planet Saturn according to the Ophites. From Ialdabaoth emanate six spirits who respectively dwell with their father in the seven planets. These seven planets are identical with the Hindu *Sapta-lokas*, the seven places or spheres, or the superior and inferior worlds; for they represent the kabalistic seven spheres. With the Ophites they belong to the lower spheres. The monograms of these Gnostic planets are also Buddhistic, the latter differing, albeit slightly, from those of the usual astrological "houses."

This, from *Isis Unveiled*, is a typical sample of Blavatsky's treatment of the Gnostics. There is an esoteric tradition, Blavatsky felt, within every religion teaching her "secret doctrine." "The Gnosis, or traditional secret knowledge, was never without its representatives in any age or country," she writes. The esoteric tradition within Christianity is represented by the Gnostics, but "it is the intense and cruel desire to crush out the last vestige of the old philosophies by perverting their meaning, for fear that their own dogmas should not be rightly fathered on them, which impels the Catholic Church to carry on such a systematic persecution in regard to Gnostics. Alas, alas!"

H.P. Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society wrote the book on secret traditions. Most esoteric movements ever since have found it almost impossible to step outside of her (sometimes unconscious) influence. A few recent groups calling themselves gnostic have appealed to an underground yet pervasive "gnosis" rather than to the ancient historical gnostic sects. This is true of La Asociacion Gnostica which is widespread throughout Latin America, as well as the Los Angeles based Ecclesia Gnostica.

Indeed, in our century there have been several appropriations of gnostic motifs. The psychologist, C.G. Jung, continually refers to the Gnostics in his writings and was often photographed "wearing his gnostic ring." His lifelong interest in the subject was rewarded in 1952 when the Jung Institute in Zurich purchased and presented to him on his birthday a recently discovered gnostic papyrus manuscript. This "Jung Codex" is now our Nag Hammadi Codex I. Jung wrote so much about the Gnostics simply because he liked them. In *Psychological Types* he writes of "the vastly superior [compared to that of the Church] intellectual content of gnosis, which in the light of our present mental development has not lost but has considerably gained in value." He goes on to praise its "Promethean and creative spirit . . . we find in Gnosticism what was lacking in the centuries that followed: a belief in the efficacy of individual revelation and individual knowledge. This belief was rooted in
the proud feeling of man’s affinity with the gods, subject to no human law, and so overmastering that it may even subdue the gods by the sheer power of gnosis."

In 1916, before he wrote his major works, during a period when he believed his house to be filled with parapsychological phenomena, Jung wrote a visionary piece called *The Seven Sermons to the Dead* and ascribed it pseudonymously to Basilides, the second-century Alexandrian Gnostic:

In the night the dead stood along the wall and cried:
We would have knowledge of god. Where is god?
Is god dead?
God is not dead. Now, as ever, he liveth.
This is a god whom ye know not, for mankind forgot it.
We name it by its name ABRAXAS.
Abraxas standeth above the sun and above the devil.
It is improbable probability, unreal reality.
Had the pleroma a being, Abraxas would be its manifestation.
The dead now raised a great tumult for they were Christians.

But Jung’s Basilides preaches on:

Abraxas begetteth truth and lying, good and evil, light and darkness, in the same word and in the same act.
Wherefore is Abraxas terrible.
It is love and love’s murder.
It is the saint and his betrayer.
It is the brightest light of day and the darkest night of madness.

In the early 1950s Dr. Jung defended himself against an attack by Martin Buber. Under discussion was the entire body of Jung’s work, but Buber pointed a particularly snide finger at “his little Abraxas opus.” The criticism was that Jung had overstepped the boundaries of psychology into religion, and had located God in the unconscious (rather than in Buber’s transcendent “Thou”). This god of the self was, he complained, “the Gnostic god who unites good and evil in himself.” Jung took all of this seriously. “Why is so much attention devoted to the question of whether I am a Gnostic?” He apologized for “once having perpetrated a poem, a sin of my [41-year-old] youth . . . I am a psychiatrist,” he responded, “whose prime concern is to record and interpret his empirical material, to investigate facts and make them more generally comprehensible.” Jung’s “empirical” defense was later to be complicated by the description in his autobiography of his composition of the *Septem Sermones*. “All my works, all my creative activity, has come from those in-
initial fantasies . . . Everything that I accomplished in later life was already contained in them, although at first only in the form of emotions and images.”

The paradoxical Abraxas of the early poem thus prefigures “the self” which Jung discussed over the next four decades as “a complexio oppositorum.” Self-knowledge is achieved through the conscious assimilation of the contents of the unconscious, including its dark “shadow” side, towards a goal of “wholeness.” Jung, therefore, was deeply interested in the gnostic insistence on evil as an active principle as opposed to the incomplete Christian view of evil as the privatio boni, the absence of good. “The Gnostics,” he writes with approval, “exhaustively discussed the problem of evil,” and he quotes the famous question of Basilides, “Whence comes evil?” Their answer was to oppose “the good, perfect, spiritual God by an imperfect, vain, ignorant and incompetent demiurge.” In his book Aion, Jung performs a telling psychoanalytic turn on this myth. “The ignorant demiurge who imagined he was the highest divinity illustrates the perplexity of the ego when it can no longer hide from itself the knowledge that it has been dethroned by a supradi­ordinate authority . . . that indescribable whole consisting of the sum of conscious and unconscious processes, the antithesis of the subjective ego-psyche, what I have called the self.” Jung pushes this interpretation to claim that “for the Gnostics — and this is their real secret — the psyche existed as a source of knowledge . . . that many of the Gnostics were nothing other than psychologists.” C.G. Jung, indeed, saw his own work as “a link in the Aurea Catena” (the Golden Chain) from Gnosticism through philosophical alchemy to the modern psychology of the unconscious. The chain had been broken by the Enlightenment with its “devilish developments, anti-christianity and rationalistic hybris.” The tradition was then revived “by Freud, who had introduced the classical Gnostic motifs of sexuality and the wicked paternal authority.” Freud, however, left out “that other essential aspect of Gnosticism: the primordial image of the spirit as another, higher god who gave mankind the vessel of spiritual transformation, a feminine principle.” Jung compensates by reintegrating these motifs and thus creating a version of psychic unity that not only paralleled his reading of Gnosticism, but was inspired by it. Jung’s psychology portrays a version of the self that is fragmented, as do many gnostic texts, and like them finds an image of divinity among these fragments. Unlike gnostic texts, however, Jungian psychology does not see salvation as a separation of that divine fragment from the mundane, and its removal to the divine. Rather, Jung takes the
entire dualist myth and locates it within the psyche. The result, as his own judgment states, is "that my leanings are therefore towards the very reverse of dualism."

Many of our century's fiction writers have portrayed versions of this psychologized Gnosticism. Herman Hesse's *Demian*, published in 1925, was written right after Hesse had undergone Jungian analysis. The characters and events of the novel constitute an allegory of the Jungian archetypes. The strongest character, Demian, appears to blur all distinctions of age, gender, or ethics. He is "unimaginably different." Demian tells the hero "dismaying" gnostic revisions of scripture to point out that the "people with character tend to receive the short end of the stick in biblical stories." Like a (Jungian) Gnostic also, Demian pushes the hero to transcend his limited view of reality. "Who would be born must first destroy a world," he says, and fly to God, a God whose "name is Abraxas, uniting the godly and devilish elements." That Demian represents an aspect of the hero's own self is clarified as the novel ends by blurring the distinction between the "other" and the "inner." In a mystical, homoerotic vision, the two characters merge into one. Hesse's next novel, *Steppenwolf*, portrays a character dwelling in "this alien world ... the homeless Steppenwolf, the solitary." Steppenwolf, with an allusion to ancient Gnosticism's most stunning image, sees "the whole of human life as a violent and ill-fated abortion of the primal mother, a savage and dismal catastrophe of nature." At conflict with "nature" (Hesse identifies this with "bourgeois convention") is "the spirit ... driven to God." In the course of the novel Steppenwolf is to discover that the conflict is more complicated, that there are not two but a thousand souls clamoring withing him, "a chaos of potentialities and impulses." In answer to his striving, Steppenwolf is given a very psychologizing, very modern message. "You have a longing to forsake this world and to penetrate to a world beyond time. You know, of course, where this other world lies hidden. Only within yourself exists that other reality ..."

These novels of Hermann Hesse are early versions of a genre that has been important throughout this century: stories of conflict between the outer world and the inner reality discovered by journeying through psychological realms. It is not surprising that some of these writings are read as "gnostic." Some, such as Doris Lessing's *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, are devastating in their criticism of normal life. Rather than promoting any integration towards a total personality, her novel valorizes the hero's dissociated psychic fantasies at the expense of his mental "health." His inner journey takes the hero to mythological lands,
to outer space, and back to earth – his “descent into hell” – as a messenger of the gods. The character’s struggle to hold on to this reality, against the drugs and shock therapy of his psychiatrists, is described with the classical gnostic metaphors (and with the typically gnostic reversal) of sleeping and waking, forgetting and remembering.

Although they vary in the radicalness of their dualism, all of these psychological writings agree that meaning is not to be discovered in the manifest world. By situating meaning within the human psyche, and implicitly ignoring any transcendent location for meaning, these works are definitely modern. Other types of “immanent” salvation have also been described as “modern Gnosticism.” A vast description of modern Gnosticism – including psychology in its scope – was the predominate theme of the political philosopher Eric Voegelin. Beginning in 1952 with *The New Science of Politics* and in many further books such as *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, Voegelin identifies “the essence of modernity as the growth of gnosticism.” He understands Gnosticism to be “the experience of the world as an alien place . . . a horror of existence and a desire to escape from it.” Rather than the ancient Gnostic achronic salvation from above, however, Voegelin sees modern Gnosticism promising salvation in the future, by means of the historical process. For this radically immanent salvation, without transcendental irruptions, he faults the eighteenth century, and has some harsh words especially for Condorcet and Voltaire. Voegelin proceeds, like some unhinged biblical prophet, to trace and decry the course of modern Gnosticism: Comte, “the first high priest of a new religion, positivism”; Hegelianism (although as early as 1835 Ferdinand Christian Baur had argued for the similarity between German idealism and Gnosticism, calling it “the philosophy of religion, the Godhead’s evolving self-knowledge through man”); Marxism, “the self-salvation of man, an intellectual swindle”; Communism, “left-wing gnosticism”; National Socialism, “right-wing gnosticism”; totalitarianism, “the end of the Gnostic search for a civil theology”; progressivism, “scientism and the immanentist pride in the variants of salvation through physics, economics, sociology, biology, and psychology.” All, all of this, Eric Voegelin calls Gnosticism. He appeals for “repressing Gnostic corruption and restoring the forces of civilization,” and concludes, “fate is in the balance.”

Voegelin’s writings could be regarded as silly were it not for their strong impact within and beyond his own field of political science. Academicians from various disciplines have gathered at conferences such as “Gnosticism and Modernity,” where they discussed such topics as
"The Gnosticism of Lincoln’s Political Rhetoric." The literary critic, Cleanth Brooks, having absorbed Voegelin’s version of Gnosticism, described Walker Percy’s novel *Lancelot* as "modern Gnosticism." The main character of this book, Lancelot Lamar, is confronted by his wife’s and daughter’s ongoing orgy with a group of sex and drug enthusiasts from Hollywood. In a fury of crazed self-righteousness, Lancelot decides to take matters into his own hands (immanent salvation) and burns down his house with everyone in it. It would appear that Voegelin’s influence has removed the distinction between "Gnosticism" and what we call "apocalypticism."

Voegelin portrays Gnosticism as an attempt to solve the ills and evils of this world by the promise of a revolutionary new realm. An ironic complement to this portrait, and a tribute to the complexity and contradictions of the ancient sects, is that the rejection of this world and disentanglement from it is only one gnostic attitude. An ascetic withdrawal is one ethical response to anti-cosmic dualism, and one which characterizes most of the Nag Hammadi texts ("The World Haters," *Time* magazine headlined its report on the present translation project). An opposite stance is to immerse oneself in worldly sins and pleasures, these being, after all, alien and uncorrupting things. This attitude, not found in our texts but attested in ancient descriptions of the gnostic sects, has inspired several recent novels of Lawrence Durrell. His four novels that make up *The Alexandria Quartet* depict a gnostic "cabal" led by a "homosexual goat" named Balthazar. "Indulge but refine" is Balthazar’s doctrine, which he claims to be uniquely Alexandrian, "a town of sects and gospels. And for every ascetic she has always thrown up one religious libertine – Carpocrates [the second-century gnostic], Anthony [the Christian monk] – who was prepared to founder in the senses as deeply and truly as any desert father in the mind..... It is the national peculiarity of the Alexandrians to seek a reconciliation (between extreme sensuality and intellectual asceticism). That is why we are hysterics and extremists. That is why we are the incomparable lovers we are."

One character, Justine, plays out on this earth the drama of the gnostic Wisdom goddess, "bending over the dirty sink with the foetus in it [like] poor Sophia of Valentinus." Are we, she wonders, "the work of an inferior deity, a Demiurge, who wrongly believed himself to be God? Heavens, how probable it seems." Justine quotes Balthazar, who in turn quotes E.M. Forster. Forster’s book *Alexandria: A History and a Guide* was the main source of Durrell’s understanding of Gnosticism, with its tragic combination of physical love and theology. Here is Forster’s lovely
retelling of the creation myth of Valentinus: "He imagines a primal God, the centre of a divine harmony, who sent out manifestations of himself in pairs of male and female. Each pair was inferior to its predecessor, and Sophia the female of the thirtieth pair, least perfect of all. She showed her imperfection not, like Lucifer, by rebelling from God, but by desiring too ardently to be united to him. She fell through love ... and the universe is formed out of her agony and remorse." Durrell went on in later novels like *Monsieur* to describe yet another modern sect of Egyptian Gnostics. In *Monsieur* the amorous interplay of genders and geometries is complex enough to rival any ancient gnostic cosmogony. "I am amazed," wrote Durrell's long time friend, that modern apostle of experience, Henry Miller, "that there has been no revival of this sect." Forster had attempted an answer: "it was pessimistic, imaginative, esoteric – three great obstacles to success."

One interpretation of ancient Gnosticism, combined with an assessment of its modern relevance, has won the favor of many scholarly specialists in gnostic studies. In the 1920s Hans Jonas was a student of both the philosopher Martin Heidegger and the New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann. He was thus in a unique position to participate, as a Bultmannian, in this century's investigation of ancient gnostic sources and, as a Heideggerian, in the philosophy of existentialism. Throughout his long career, Jonas has played these two themes against each other. The link between the two is provided by dualism. "Gnosticism," he claims "has been the most radical embodiment of dualism ever to have appeared on the stage of history. It is a split between self and world, men's alienation from nature, the metaphysical devaluation of nature, the cosmic solitude of the spirit and the nihilism of mundane norms." It is "a lasting paradigm of the human condition." Likewise, "the essence of existentialism is a certain dualism, an estrangement between man and the world." Existentialism also contains a "depreciation of the concept of nature." Gnosticism, therefore, has "an analogical modernity." In his book *The Gnostic Religion*, Jonas focuses on one specific image that is used by both the ancients and the moderns to describe "the self-experience of existence," the image of "having been thrown." Here is Heidegger in *Being and Time*: "This characteristic of Dasein's Being ... we call it the 'thrownness' (*Geworfenheit*). This downward plunge into and within the groundlessness of the inauthentic Being, is characterized by temptation, tranquillizing, alienation ..." Jonas compares this to the famous ancient Valentinian formula that freedom is the knowledge of, among other things, "wherein we have been thrown." He made
this comparison before the availability of the Nag Hammadi translations, which describe how Yaldabaoth and the archons "threw" mankind into matter and distraction. Jonas expertly draws attention to the dissimilarities as well: "Gnostic man is thrown into an antagonistic, anti-divine, and therefore anti-human nature, modern man into an indifferent one." The modern version is more nihilistic, "a dualism without metaphysics." Thrownness is, in both systems, however, "an existential mode of the past," nor is there, he argues, a mode of genuine existence in the future. Genuine existence, freedom, dwells "only in the crisis between past and future, the razor's edge of decision, the existential present of the moment."

Hans Jonas presents a compelling argument, and the similarities between ancient Gnosticism and modern existentialism do seem at least "analogical." We should keep in mind, however, the surprising condemnation of Gnosticism made by Albert Camus. Gnosticism, he claims in *The Rebel*, is conciliatory. It alters the course of metaphysical rebellion by developing the theory of a wicked, inferior god against whom to direct its attack, and exalts a superior god. "The vast number of aeons invented by Valentinus," for instance, "are the equivalent of the intermediary truths to be found in Hellenism. Their aim is to diminish the absurdity of an intimate relationship between suffering humanity and an implacable god."

Existentialist alienation and modern versions of visionary romanticism have combined to give Gnosticism a powerful literary expression. Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, fellow students at Columbia University in the 1940's, were introduced to Gnosticism by their professor Raymond Weaver. John Tytell, an historian of "the Beat Generation," has shown that an interest in gnostic themes voiced itself in Kerouac's 1959 novel *Doctor Sax*. This mythic reverie of a book ("Memory and dream are intermixed in this mad universe") describes Doctor Sax, "the King of Anti Evil," and his attempts to save the world from "the Great World Snake of evil" with its "moo mouth maw of death." The snake, with its "scaly ululating back," is "an unforgettable flow of evil and wrath and of Satan"; and Doctor Sax, in "his slouched hat" (like Ahab's — Kerouac's professor had been a Melville scholar), searches the world "for herbs that he knew someday he would perfect into an alchemic-almost poison art . . . that would make the Snake drop dead." The novel climaxes in a grand nightmare that seems to draw in every stock character from both sides of the conflict between good and evil. Allen Ginsberg also employs gnostic imagery to voice his hatred of evil in the world. In his
nuclear protest poem "Plutonian Ode," written in 1978 after reading Jonas's book on Gnosticism, he confronts our "Radioactive Nemesis . . . named for Death's planet." Ginsberg's poem, in the form of an exorcistic chant, evokes the planetary archons of the Gnostics:

I salute your dreadful presence lasting majestic as the Gods,
Sabaot, Jehova, Astapheus, Adonaeus, Elohim, Iao, Ialdabaoth, Aeon
from Aeon born ignorant in an Abyss of Light,
Sophia's reflections glittering thoughtful galaxies, whirlpools of star-spume
silver-thin as hairs of Einstein!

Gnostic motifs have been identified in that most visionary of our modern literary genres, science fiction. Historian William Irwin Thompson sees the gnostic myth in Nicholas Roeg's film The Man Who Fell to Earth and in Zena Henderson's novel Pilgrimage. Both of these stories are about characters whose sojourn on this planet is a tragic separation from their true home. Painfully alienated, they struggle through memory to regain identification with their higher origins. Superman, too, although he is not homesick, is an alien battling against the forces of evil. Good and evil in "The Myth of Superman," Umberto Eco has written, are "clearly divided into zones of Manichaen incontrovertibility." It is, however, in the science fiction novels of the prolific writer Philip K. Dick that Gnosticism is most consciously employed. In Valis, published in 1981, a year before Dick's death, the main character has an encounter with the divine which "fires information into his head by a beam of pink light." The divine is "Mind," but Mind divided against itself, as two contending principles, like the schizophrenic main character of the novel. "From loss and grief the Mind has become deranged," he says. "Therefore we, as parts of the universe, the Brain, are partly deranged." This character, called Horselover Fat, has the following conversation with his therapist:

"Do you believe man is created in God's image?"
"Yes," Fat said, "but the creator deity, not the true God."
"What?"
Fat said, "That's Yaldabaoth. Sometimes called Samael, the blind god. He's deranged."
"What the hell are you talking about?"

Fat is talking about On the Origin of the World from the first edition of The Nag Hammadi Library published in 1977, which Dick quotes elsewhere in the novel. "A lunatic blind creator and his screwed-up world" explained, for Dick, the "irrational, whacked out, psychotic" universe.
In the course of the novel, Fat attempts to recapture, beyond the irrational god (and beyond his own schizophrenia), the true God. This science fiction novel and its sequel, *The Divine Invasion*, tell a cosmic story where mental psychoses play out a drama of madness and intelligence, where fragments of divinity lose and remember themselves in human minds. It might be supposed that the Nag Hammadi texts inspired these novels, but Gnosticism, it seems, is never so simple. "Horselover Fat" is a multilingual pun for the author's own name, and Philip K. Dick claimed that *Valis* was autobiographical, that he, like his character, had an encounter with a beam of divine pink light in 1974. The publication of the Nag Hammadi translations only confirmed his revelation.

A quite self-conscious incorporation of Nag Hammadi texts into a science fiction novel appeared in Harold Bloom's 1979 novel *The Flight to Lucifer: A Gnostic Fantasy*. In it the reincarnated Valentinus and his companions fly to a planet called Lucifer. Quoting our gnostic texts, the heroes wage a violent battle against Saklas, the Demiurge who is worshipped in his "Saklaseum." Bloom, more successful as an interpreter of literature, later confessed that *The Flight to Lucifer* reads as though Walter Pater were writing *Star Wars*. But, then, so does much ancient gnostic writing.

Harold Bloom's strongest appropriation of Gnosticism is in his theoretical books of literary criticism. He describes his "mode of interpreting literary texts as a Valentinian approach," that is, "an antithetical and revisionist way of reading." In a series of books beginning with *The Anxiety of Influence* in 1973 he studies "the anxiety that blocks creativity" when a writer faces his great precursors. "In Yeats," for instance, the precursor is "the Spectre of Blake." Bloom's argument is that literary influence always proceeds by "a deliberately perverse misreading . . . an act of creative correction, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism whose purpose is to clear away the precursor so as to open a space for oneself." A text is therefore "a psychic battlefield" where influence fights to move backwards. Bloom's model for this is "Gnosticism, the religion of belatedness." "Valentinus," he argues, "is troping upon and indeed against his precursor authorities, to reverse his relationship to the Bible and to Plato, by joining himself to an asserted earlier truth that they supposedly have distorted." In 1982, in *Agon*, Bloom "misread" his gnostic precursors and claimed them for the latest school of literary criticism: "Gnosticism was the inaugural and most powerful of Deconstructions because it undid all genealogies, scrambled all hierarchies, allegorized every microcosm/macrocosm relation, and rejected
every representation of divinity as non-referential.” Bloom’s willfulness and enthusiasm bowl the reader over. “Abandon Heidegger for Valentinus,” he calls out. If his creative misprision is successful, it will be measured by our inability to read these old texts without feeling Harold Bloom’s influence upon them.

By turning reading into an activity upon the text, or rather, by his re-situating of meaning within the intertextual relationship between texts, Bloom has shifted the discussion of Gnosticism away from the modern into the postmodern situation. Ihab Hassan’s 1987 book *The Postmodern Turn* draws on Bloom and many other theorists to discuss a “New Gnosticism” characterized by the dematerialization of existence. The “New Gnosticism does not revert directly to the ancient cults,” yet it was “prefigured by the ancient Gnostics, authors of a passionate subjectivity.” Contempoary philosophy and literary criticism are on “a gnostic journey into subjectivity, that leaves texts behind and vanishes into consciousness.” Our own mental constructs, he claims, are our knowledge. Human beings are becoming “gnostic creatures constituting themselves, determining their universe by symbols of their own making,” and he indicates science fiction and fantasy literature as examples. As with the ancient Gnostics, the traditional codes no longer determine our meaning. The traditional canon of texts no longer has authority. Hassan sees “a vast, revisionary will” at work in our culture, unsettling and heterogeneous, and he quotes Jean-François Lyotard’s now famous clarion call of postmodernism: “Let us wage a war on totality.”

This postmodern appreciation of Gnosticism seems indeed to have an affinity with ancient sectarianism and revisionary mythologizing. Ihab Hassan considers “immanence” to be one of the main characteristics of the “New Gnosticism,” a quality of both modern and postmodern theory. Thus, as Charles Jencks describes postmodern art and architecture, we have personal invented mythology and metaphors with no shared metaphysical substance. Anatole France (himself a writer who never made it into modernism) wrote an eloquent version of immanent gnostic salvation in his 1914 novel *The Revolt of the Angels*:

The God of old is dispossessed of His terrestrial empire, and every thinking being on this globe disdains Him or knows Him not. But what matter that men should be no longer submissive to Ialdabaoth if the spirit of Ialdabaoth is still in them; if they, like Him, are jealous, violent, quarrelsome, and greedy, and the foes of the arts and of beauty? What matter that they have rejected the ferocious demiurge? It is in ourselves and in ourselves alone that we must attack and destroy Ialdabaoth.
How much do these attempts to see modern, or even postmodern, relevance in Gnosticism help us to understand our ancient texts? or do they misuse the evidence? The evidence, in any case, is conflicting, as James M. Robinson declares in the opening sentences of the introduction to this book. It has also been pointed out that none of the Nag Hammadi texts use “gnostic” as a term of self-designation. Other ancient sources tell us that “gnostic” was used by some sects as a self-designation, but certainly not by all of the various sects that came to be called Gnosticism. We might also notice that the only mention of the famous gnostic here-siarchs in this library (in *The Testimony of Truth*) is as opponents, and “they” are attacked as heretics! With the publication of the Nag Hammadi library the study of ancient Gnosticism has become increasingly problematic, so likewise its relevance. The frequently attempted etymological definition (gnostic comes from the Greek word for know) is frustratingly inadequate. We do better to avoid generalizations and to marvel at the variety of the sources. The variety was brought about more by the mundane issues of time and space, than by theological debates. The first issue was the authority of tradition against revealed interpretations; the other was hierarchical unification against sectarianism. By taking the wrongheaded side of both these issues, the sects and our texts were excluded, and “Gnosticism” became a symbol of heresy. Interpretive appropriations of Gnosticism have all used this element of otherness: the Gnostics as anti-Christians, as visionaries, as esotericists, as symbolists of the psyche, as alienated, and as violent misinterpreters and revisers.

The recent availability of this large number of primary texts has opened up new ways of discussing, new relevances for, the ancient sects we call gnostic. By their skewed readings, by animating the relationship between tradition and imagination, these texts capture our attention. If cultures define themselves not at their calm centers, but at their peripheral conflicts of inclusion and exclusion, then Gnosticism, whatever we mean by it, is more than an antiquarian curiosity. It stands as a continuing testament to difference in the face of our cultural tendencies toward closed homogeneity.
This definitive edition of *The Nag Hammadi Library* is the only complete, one-volume, English-language edition of the renowned library of fourth-century manuscripts discovered in Egypt in 1945. It includes the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and other Gnostic gospels and sacred texts. First published in 1978 and revised, expanded, and updated in 1988, *The Nag Hammadi Library* launched modern Gnostic studies and exposed a movement within Christianity whose teachings are in many ways—as bestselling author Elaine Pagels has shown—as relevant today as they were centuries ago.

This edition takes into account recent developments in Gnostic scholarship, including the significance of the Gospel of Thomas as a source of the authentic sayings of Jesus. The translators include such prominent scholars as Elaine Pagels, Marvin Meyer, Helmut Koester, and Bentley Layton.

**Praise for *The Nag Hammadi Library***:

"Opens the secrets of a religion, which the Gnostics themselves had hoped would be kept sealed until the Last Day."—*The New York Review of Books*

"This fascinating collection will become as welcome an addition to the understanding of the formative years of the early Christian Church as the books on the Dead Sea Scrolls."—*The Washington Star*

"A tremendous achievement."—*Chicago Theological Seminary Register*

"A significant event."—*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

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