Extracts from the Books of the Saviour (Mead translation)

Pistis Sophia (3rd century)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Section 1. The disciples ask a boon of Jesus

It came to pass, therefore, after they had crucified Jesus, our Master, that he rose from the dead on the third day. And the disciples came together unto him and besought him, saying: ”Master, have mercy upon us, for we have left father and mother, and the whole world, and have followed thee.” Then Jesus stood by the sea of the Ocean, with his disciples, and made invocation with this prayer, saying: ”Hear me, O father, father of all fatherhood, boundless light: aeêiouô iaô aôi ôia psinôther thernôps nôpsither zagourê pagourê nethmomaôth nepsiomaôth marachachtha thôbarrhabau tharnachachan zorokothora ieou sabaôth.” And while Jesus was reciting this, Thomas, Andrew, James, and Simon, the Canaanite, stood on the west, with their faces turned towards the east; Philip and Bartholomew stood on the south, facing towards the north; the rest of the disciples with all the women disciples stood behind Jesus. But Jesus stood at the altar. And Jesus cried aloud, turning towards the four angles of the world, together with his disciples all clad in linen robes, saying:

”iaô iaô iaô. This is the interpretation thereof: iôta, The pleroma hath gone forth; alpha, They shall return within; ômega, There shall be an end of ends.” And when Jesus had thus spoken, he said: ”iaphtha iaphtha mounaêr mounaêr ermanouêr ermanouêr. That is to say, O father of every fatherhood of the boundless [spaces], hear me because of my disciples whom I have brought into thy presence, that they may believe in all the words of thy truth; grant unto them all things for which I have cried unto thee, for I know the name of the father of the treasure of light.” Yet again did Jesus, that is to say Aberamenthô, cry aloud, invoking the name of the father of the treasure of light, and saying: ”Let all the mysteries of the rulers, authorities, angels, archangels, and all the powers and all the works of the invisible gods, Agrammachamareg and Barbêlô Bdellê, withdraw themselves, and roll themselves on to the right.”

And in that hour all the heavens moved to the west; all the æons, the spheres and their rulers and all their powers sped to the west to the left of the disk of the sun and the disk of the moon.

Section 2. The figure of the disk of the sun

And the disk of the sun was a vast dragon whose tail was in its mouth, mounted on seven powers of the left, drawn by four powers which bore the likeness of white horses. But the car of the moon was like a ship, whose helms were a male dragon and a female dragon, drawn by two white oxen. The figure of a babe was on the poop steering the dragons who seized the light from the rulers; and at the prow was the face of a cat. And the whole world, with its mountains and seas, sped to the west to the left. And Jesus and his disciples remained in the midst of an aerial region, in the paths of the way of the midst, which is below the sphere. And they came to the first order, on the way which is in the midst. And Jesus halted in the atmosphere of that region with his disciples.

The disciples said unto Jesus: ”What is this region in which we are?” Jesus said unto them: ”These are the regions of the way of the midst. It hath come to pass, that the rulers of Adamas, being in sedition, have persisted in congress and procreated rulers, and archangels, and angels, and workmen and decans. [So] Ieou, the father of my father, came forth from the right, and bound them to the fate of the sphere. ”For there are twelve aeons, Sabaôth Adamas ruling over six of them and his brother Iabraôth ruling over the remaining six. But Iabraôth and his rulers have believed in the mysteries of the light, and practising the mysteries of the light they have abandoned the mystery of congress. Whereas Sabaôth Adamas and his rulers have continued to practise [the mystery of] congress. ”And when Ieou, the father of my father, saw that Iabraôth had believed, he took him up with all the rulers that had believed with him. Receiving [his soul] in the sphere, he brought him unto a pure atmosphere, near the light of the sun, between the regions of them of the midst and the regions of the invisible god. Thus he set him with the rulers that had believed.

”But he took Sabaôth Adamas with his rulers, who had not practised the mysteries of the light, but had persisted in practising the mysteries of congress, and bound them to the sphere. ”He bound eighteen hundred rulers in every aeon, and set three hundred and sixty over them, and [further] set five other great rulers to rule over the three hundred and sixty and all the other rulers that are bound. The [five] they call in the world of human kind

by these names: the first is called Kronos; the second, Arês; the third, Hermês; the fourth, Aphrodite; the fifth, Zeus."

Section 3. Of the powers that Ieou infused into the five regents

And Jesus continued in his conversation and said: ”Hearken further, that I may tell you their mystery. It came to pass, therefore, when Ieou had thus bound them, that he drew forth a mighty power from the great invisible, and bound it to him that is called Kronos; and he drew another power out of Ipsantachounchainchoucheôch, who is one of the three triple-powered gods, and bound it to Arês; and he drew a power out of Chainchôôôch, who is also one of the three triple-powered gods, and bound it to Hermês; and again he drew a power out of Pistis Sophia, daughter of Barbêlô, and bound it to Aphrodite. ”Moreover, reflecting that they had need of a helm to steer the world and the æons of the spheres, that they might not wreck them through their iniquity, he ascended into the midst, and drew out a power from the little Sabaôth, the good, who is in the midst, and bound it to Zeus, for he is good, so that he might direct them by his goodness. And he set the revolution of his order, so that he passeth three months in each [of the remaining four æons], establishing it, so that every ruler into which he cometh is freed from the evil of his iniquity. And he [Ieou] gave him [Zeus] two aeons for his habitation, near those of Hermès.

”I have first told you the names of these five great rulers, which the men of the world employ. Hearken further, I will now tell you their incorruptible names also: Ôrimouth is [the name] of Kronos; Mounichoua-phôr, of Arès; Tarpetanouph, of Hermès; Chôsi, of Aphrodite; Chônbal, of Zeus. These are their incorruptible names.” When the disciples had heard these things, they bowed down, and worshipped Jesus, saying: ”Blessed are we beyond all men, for thou hast revealed unto us these mighty wonders.” They continued further, and besought him, saying: ”We beseech thee, reveal unto us why these ways exist.” And Mary came unto him, she bowed herself, and worshipped his feet, and kissed his hands, saying: ”Yea, Master, reveal unto us the need for the ways of the midst; for we have heard thee say that they are set over great torments. How, then, O Master, shall we go forth from them, or how shall we escape from them? Or how do they seize hold of souls? And how long are [souls] in their torments? Have mercy upon us, Master and saviour, lest the receivers carry off our souls to the judgments of the ways of the midst, and lest we be condemned in their evil torments, that we, too, may inherit the light of thy father, and may not be wretched and starving without thee.”

*SECTION 3. OF THE POWERS THAT IEOU INFUSED INTO THE FIVE REGENTS*5

And when Mary had spoken these words in tears, Jesus answered in great compassion and said unto them: ”Of very truth, my brethren and well-beloved, ye who have left father and mother for my name’s sake, unto you will I give all the mysteries and every gnosis.

Section 4. Of the mysteries which Jesus will give unto his disciples

”I will give unto you the mystery of the twelve æons of the rulers, their seals, their numbers, and the manner of invocation to enter into their regions. ”I will give unto you, moreover, the mystery of the thirteenth æon, and the manner of invocation to enter into their regions; I will give unto you their seals and their numbers. ”And I will give unto you the mystery of the baptism of them of the midst, and the manner of invocation to enter into their regions; and I will teach you their numbers and their seals. ”And I will give unto you the baptism of them of the right, its numbers and its seals, and the manner of invocation to enter into its region. ”And I will give unto you the great mystery of the treasure of light, and the manner of invocation for entering therein. ”I will give unto you all the mysteries and every gnosis, that ye may be called the sons of the pleroma, perfect in every gnosis and every mystery. Blessed indeed are ye, beyond all men, who are on the earth, for the sons of light have come in your time.”

And Jesus continued in his conversation and said: ”It came to pass, therefore, after these things, that the father of my father—the same is Ieou—descended and took further three hundred and sixty rulers of the rulers of Adamas, who had not believed in the mystery of the light, and bound them in these aerial regions, in which we are now, below the sphere. He established, moreover, five great rulers over them, who are those who are in the way of the midst. ”The first ruler of the way of the midst is called Paraplēx. She is a ruler of female form, whose hair reacheth unto her feet. Under her authority are five and twenty archdæmons, which rule over other hosts of dæmons. These dæmons enter into men and make them rage and curse and slander; and these also hurry off and ravish souls and cast them into the smoke of their darkness and their evil torments.”

Mary said: ”Shall I behave unseemly in questioning thee? Be not wroth with me searching out all things.” Jesus said unto her: ”Ask what thou wilt.” Mary said unto him: ”Master, reveal unto us how they hurry off and ravish souls, that my brethren also may know thereof.”

Section 5. Of Ieou and Melchisedec

Jesus, that is to say, Aberamenthô, said: ”When the father of my father—the same is Ieou—who is the providence of all the rulers and gods and powers, which are in the matter of the light of the treasure, and Zorokothora Melchisedec, who is the legate for all the light-powers which are purified among the rulers, to bring them into the treasure of light—these two alone are the great lights, and their appointed task is to descend below among the rulers and purify them, and then Zorokothora Melchisedec taketh away the pure radiance of their light from them whom they have cleansed among the rulers, that they may bring it unto the treasure of light. ”[This is done] when the number and time of their task come to pass for them to descend among the rulers and cast them down and constrain them, taking away their radiance from the rulers. ”But when the time cometh for them [Ieou and Melchisedec] to cease from casting them down and constraining them, and for them to return to the regions of the treasure of light, it cometh to pass, when they come unto the region of the midst, that Zorokothora Melchisedec beareth away the light-radiances and bringeth them unto the gate of them of the midst, to carry them into the treasure of light. Ieou, also, withdraweth into the regions of them of the right, until the time of the number cometh for them again to descend.

”Forthwith, then, the rulers rebel because of the wrath of their iniquity, and march against the light-powers [of the souls], because they [Ieou and Melchisedec] are then no longer among them, and they hurry off [all] the souls they can harry and ravish, to destroy them in the smoke of their darkness and their evil fire. ”Then it is that this power, the same Paraplēx, with the dæmons over which she rules, hurrieth off the souls of the passionate, blasphemers, and slanderers, that she may send them into the smoke of her darkness, and destroy them in her malignant fire, that they may begin to be undone and dissolved. Thirty and three years and nine months do they pass in the punishments of her regions, while she tormenteth them in the fire of her malignancy.

Section 6. Of the time when souls are freed from the torments of their rulers

”It cometh to pass after these years, when the sphere of little Sabaôth, [that is to say] Zeus, revolveth so as to come into the first æon of the sphere, which is called in the world the Ram of Boubastis, that is to say Aphrodite; when, then, she [Aphrodite] shall have come into the seventh house of the sphere, which is the Balance, [it cometh to pass that] the veils between them of the right and them of the left are drawn aside, and there glanceth forth from the height, among them of the right, the great Sabaôth, the good, [lord] of the whole world and of all the sphere. But before he glanceth forth, he gazeth down on the regions of Paraplêx, that they may be dissolved and perish, and that all the souls which are in her torments, may be brought forth and again led into the sphere, for they are perishing in the torments of Paraplêx.”

He continued further in his conversation and said: ”The second order [of the five dæmonial rulers], called Æthiopic Ariouth, is a female ruler, entirely black; and under her are fourteen [arch]dæmons, ruling over other hosts of dæmons. And these dæmons, under the sway of Æthiopic Ariouth, are they who enter into strife-makers, to stir up wars, so that there may be slaughter; who harden their hearts and inflame them for slaughter. ”And the souls, which this power hurrieth off and ravisheth, will pass one hundred and thirteen years in her regions, while she torments them by the smoke of her darkness and her malignant fire, so that they are brought nigh unto destruction. ”And then, when the sphere shall turn, and the little Sabaôth, the good, who is called in the world Zeus, when he shall come to the fourth æon of the sphere, that is to say the Crab, and when Boubastis shall come, who is called in the world Aphroditê, when she shall come into the tenth æon of the sphere, which is called the Goat, then the veils which are between them of the left and them of the right, are drawn apart, that Ieou may gaze forth from the right, that the whole world may be troubled and confused, and all the æons of the sphere; and he will gaze on the habitations of Æthiopic Ariouth, so that her regions are dissolved and perish, and that all the souls which are in her

torments may be restored to the sphere, for they are perishing in the smoke of her darkness and her malignant fire."

Section 7. The regent of the third dæmonial hierarchy

He continued further in his conversation and said: ”Of the third order, called triple-faced Hekatê, there are also under her authority seven and twenty [arch]dæmons. . . . These are they who enter into men to cause them to commit perjury and speak lies, and covet what doth not belong to them. ”The souls, then, which Hekatê will hurry off and ravish, she will hand over to the dæmons under her [sway], that they may be tormented by the smoke of the darkness, and its malignant fire, that they may be mightily constrained by the dæmons. One hundred and five years and six months do they spend in this region, chastised in its malignant torments, and they come nigh unto destruction and dissolution. ”After this, when the sphere shall revolve and the little Sabaôth, the good, shall come, he of the midst, whom they call in the world Zeus, when he shall come into the eighth æon of the sphere, called the Scorpion, and when Boubastis, whom they call Aphroditê, shall come and enter into the second æon of the sphere called the Bull, [then] the veils which are between them of the right and them of the left are drawn aside, that Zorokothora Melchisedec may look down from on high, and the world be thrown into confusion, and its mountains, and the æons be troubled, that he may look down on all the regions of Hekatê, that her regions may be dissolved and perish, and that all the souls in her torments may be brought forth, and restored again to the spheres, for they are being undone in the fire of her torments.”

He continued further in his conversation and said: ”The fourth order is called Typhôn, the assessor. He is a powerful ruler, having under his authority two and thirty dæmons. These are they who enter into men and make them lust, and commit fornication and adultery, and be ever engaged in intercourse. The souls, then, which this ruler will take and ravish, pass one hundred and twenty-eight years in his region, while his dæmons torment them with the smoke of the darkness and its malignant fire, so that they come nigh to dissolution and destruction. ”But it cometh to pass, when the sphere turneth, and the little Sabaôth, the good, he of the midst, whom they call Zeus, cometh, when he shall have entered into the ninth æon of the sphere, called the Bowman, and Boubastis, whom they call in the world Aphrodite, shall have come into the third of the æons of the sphere, called the Twins, that [then] the veils which are between them of the left and them of the right, are drawn aside, that Zarazaz, whom the rulers call Maskelli after the name of a powerful ruler of their own

regions, may gaze down on the regions of the habitations of Typhôn, the assessor, so that his regions may be dissolved and perish, and that all the souls which are in his torments may be brought forth, and again restored to the sphere, for they are being undone in the smoke of his darkness and his malignant fire."

Section 8. The regent of the fifth dæmonial hierarchy

Again he continued further in his conversation and said unto his disciples: ”Of the fifth order they call the ruler Iach-thanabas. He is a powerful ruler, having under him other hosts of dæmons. These are they who enter into men and make them corrupt—treating the just with injustice, favouring the cause of sinners, taking money for a just judgment, and then upsetting it, forgetting the poor and needy, increasing the forgetfulness of their own souls, and of anything of which there is no profit [to be made]— so that they should do nothing worthy of record in their lives, in order that when they have passed out of their bodies they may be hurried off bankrupt. ”The souls, then, which this ruler shall carry off bankrupt, shall continue in his torments one hundred and fifty years and eight months, that he may destroy them by the smoke of his darkness and his malignant fire, that they may be mightily constrained by the flames of his fire.

”And when the sphere turneth and there cometh the little Sabaôth, the good, whom they call in the world Zeus, when he cometh into the eleventh æon of the sphere, called the Waterer, and Boubastis cometh into the fifth æon of the sphere, called the Lion, then the veils which are between them of the left and them of the right, are drawn aside, that the great Iaô, the good, he of the midst, who presideth over the region of Iachthanabas, may gaze forth, that his regions may be dissolved and perish, and that all the souls which are in his torments may be brought forth and again restored to the sphere, for they are perishing in his torments. ”These then are the operations of the ways of the midst concerning which ye have questioned me.” And when the disciples had heard this, they bowed down and adored him saying: ”Save us, O Master, have mercy upon us, that we may be preserved from these malignant torments which are prepared for sinners. Woe unto them! woe unto the children of men! for they are like the blind feeling in the darkness, and seeing not.

Have mercy upon us, O Master, in the great blindness in which we are; and have mercy upon the whole race of human kind, for they lie in wait for their souls, as lions for their prey, to tear them in pieces and make food for their torments, because of the forgetfulness and ignorance in which they are. Have mercy, therefore, upon us, O Master, our saviour, have mercy upon us, preserve us from this great stupor.”

Section 9. Jesus encourageth his disciples

Jesus said unto his disciples: ”Have courage, fear not, for ye are blessed; nay, I will make you lords over all these, and place them in subjection under your feet. Ye remember, that I have already said unto you before my crucifixion, ’I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.’ Now again I say unto you, I will give them unto you.” When, then, Jesus had thus spoken, he chanted an invocation in the great name, and the regions of the ways of the midst were hidden from view, and Jesus and his disciples remained in an atmosphere of exceeding great light. Jesus said to his disciples: ”Come unto me.” And they came unto him. He turned towards the four angles of the world; he uttered the great name over their heads, and blessed them and breathed on their eyes. Jesus said unto them: ”Look up, and mark what ye see!”

And they raised their eyes unto the height, and saw a great light, exceedingly brilliant, which no man in the world could describe. He said unto them a second time: ”Look into the light, and mark what ye see!” They said: ”We see fire and water, and wine and blood.” Jesus, that is to say Aberamenthô, said unto his disciples: ”Amen, I say unto you, I have brought nothing into the world when I came, save this fire and water, this wine and blood. I brought down the water and fire from the region of the light of light, from the treasure of light; I brought down the wine and the blood from the region of Barbêlô. And shortly after my father sent unto me the holy breath in the form of a dove. ”The fire, the water, and the wine are for cleansing all the sins of the world; the blood I had as a sign of the body of human kind, and I received it in the region of Barbêlô, the great power of the divine invisible; while the breath draweth all souls and bringeth them unto the region of light.

”For this cause have I said unto you, ’I am come to cast fire on the earth’; that is to say, I am come to purify the sins of the whole world with fire. ”For this cause I said to the Samaritan woman, ’If thou hadst known of the gift of God, and who hath said unto thee, Give me to drink,” thou wouldst have asked him to give thee living water, that thou mightest have had a fountain welling up in thee for life eternal.’ ”For this cause, also, I took a cup of wine, and blessed it, and gave it unto you, saying, ’This is the blood of the covenant which shall be poured out for you, for the remission of your sins.’ ”For this cause, also, they pierced my side

with a spear, and there came forth water and blood. ”These are the mysteries of the light which remit sins; that is to say, these are the appellations and names of [these mysteries of] the light.”

Section 10. Jesus and his disciples descend to the earth

It came to pass after this, that Jesus gave the command, ”Let all the powers of the left return to their regions.” And Jesus and his disciples were [once more] on the Mount of Galilee. And the disciples continued further and besought him: ”How long, then, will it be before thou shalt cause the sins and iniquities which we have committed, to be remitted, that we may be worthy of the kingdom of thy father?” And Jesus said unto them: ”Amen, I say unto you, not only will I purify your sins, but I will also make you worthy of the kingdom of my father; and I will give unto you the mystery of the remission of sins on the earth, so that he to whom ye shall remit on earth, shall be pardoned in the heavens, and he whom ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in the heavens. I will give unto you the mystery of the kingdom of the heavens, that ye also may give it unto men.”

And Jesus said: ”Bring me some fire and vine branches.” They brought them unto him. He set out the offering, placing two vessels of wine, the one on the right and the other on the left thereof. The offering was set in front [of the vessels]. He placed a cup of water in front of the vessel of wine on the right, and a cup of water in front of the vessel of wine on the left. Between the cups he set pieces of bread according to the number of the disciples. The cups were behind the bread. Jesus stood before the offering and grouped his disciples behind him, all clad in linen garments, holding in their hands the number of the name of the father of the treasure of light. He cried aloud, saying: ”Hear me, O father, father of all fatherhood, boundless light; iaô iouô iaô aôi ôia psinôther therôpsin ôpsither nephthomaôth nephiomaôth marachachtha marmarachtha iêanamenaman amanêi of heaven israi hamên hamên soubaibai appaap hamên hamên deraarai hapahou hamên hamên sasarsartou hamên hamên koukiamin miai hamên hamên iai iai touap hamên hamên hamên hamên mainmari mariê marei hamên hamên hamên.

”Hear me, O father, father of all fatherhood. I invoke you also, ye who remit sins and purify iniquities. Remit the sins of the souls of these my disciples who have followed me, and purge their iniquities; make them fit to be reckoned in the kingdom of my father, the father of the treasure of light, for they have followed me and kept my commandments. ”Now, therefore, O father, father of all fatherhood, let them approach who remit sins; for these are their names:

siphirepsnichieu zenei berimou sochabrichêr euthari nanai dieisbalmêrich meunipos chirie entair mouthiour smour peuchêr oouschous minionor isochobortha. ”Hear me, I invoke you, remit the sins of these souls, and blot out their offences. Let them be fit to be counted in the kingdom of my father, the father of the treasure of light. ”For I know the great powers and invoke them: auêr bebrô athroni êoureph êône souphen knitousochreôph mauônbi mnenôr souôni chôcheteôph chôcheeteôph memôch anêmph.

”Remit the sins of these souls, blot out their offences, both those which they have committed knowingly, and those they have committed unknowingly, and those which they have committed in fornication and adultery even unto this day, remit them unto them, and make them fit to be counted in the kingdom of my father, and worthy to receive of this offering. ”Holy father, my father, if then thou hast heard me, if thou hast remitted the sins of these souls, and blotted out their offences, and made them fit to be reckoned in thy kingdom, give unto me the sign in this offering.”

Section 11. The rite is consummated

And the sign of which Jesus spake, was given. Jesus said unto his disciples: ”Rejoice and be glad, for your sins are remitted, your offences blotted out, and ye have been numbered in the kingdom of my father.” And when he had thus spoken, the disciples rejoiced with great joy. Jesus said unto them: ”This is the rite and this is the mystery which ye shall celebrate for them who believe in you. If there be no deceit in them, if they hearken unto you in every good thing, their sins and their offences shall be blotted out up to the very day on which ye shall have celebrated for them this mystery. But hide ye this mystery, give it not unto every man, but unto him [only] who shall do all things which I have said unto you in my commandments. ”This then is the mystery of the reality of the baptism of them whose sins shall be remitted and their offences blotted out. This is the baptism of the first offering, which leadeth to the region of truth and into the region of light.”

After this the disciples again said unto him: ”Master, reveal unto us the mystery of the light of thy father, for we have heard thee say, ’There is a baptism of incense; there is a baptism of the holy breath of the light; and there is a spiritual chrism; these bring souls into the treasure of light.’ Reveal unto us, therefore, their mystery, that we also may inherit the kingdom of thy father.” Jesus said unto them: ”As to these mysteries which ye seek after, there is no mystery which is higher than them. They will bring your souls into the light of lights, into the regions of truth and righteousness, into the region of the holy of all holies, into the region where there is neither female nor male, nor form in that region, but only light, unceasing, ineffable. No mystery is higher than these mysteries which ye seek after, save only the mystery of the seven voices and their nine and forty powers and numbers; the name which is higher than them all, the name which sums up all their names, all their lights and all their powers.

Section 12. Of the efficacy of that name

”If, then, a man knoweth that name, when he shall have passed from the body of matter, no smoke, no darkness, no authority, no ruler of the sphere of the fate, no angel, no archangel, no power, shall be able to hold back the soul that knoweth that name; but when it shall have passed out of the world, if it uttereth that name to the fire, it is quenched and the darkness retireth. ”If it uttereth it to the dæmons and the receivers of the outer darkness, to their rulers, their authorities, or their powers, they shall all be destroyed, so that their flames consume [them], and they shall cry aloud, ’Thou art holy, thou art holy, most holy of all holies.’ ”And if a man uttereth that name to the receivers of the malignant torments, to their authorities and all their powers, and also to Barbêlô, to the invisible deity and the three triple-powered gods, the instant he shall utter that name in those regions, they shall all fall on their faces, and be dissolved and perish, and cry aloud, ’O light of lights, that are in the boundless lights, remember us also and purify us.’”

When Jesus had finished speaking these words, all the disciples cried aloud, with great sobs, saying: . . . . . .
. . . . . .
in order that they may chastise it for six more months and eight days, and then bring it up into the way of the midst, that each of the rulers of the way of the midst may chastise it in his torments for six more months and eight days, and then bring it unto the virgin of light who judgeth the good and the evil, that she may judge it. And when the sphere shall turn, she will hand it over to her receivers, that they may cast it into the æons of the sphere. And the workmen of the sphere will cast it into the lake which is below the sphere, so that this [lake] becometh a seething fire and eateth into it, until it hath mightily purified it.

”Then cometh Ialuham, the receiver of Sabaôth Adamas, who giveth the draught of oblivion unto the souls, to bring a draught full of the water of oblivion and give it unto the soul, that it may drink, and forget every place and every region through which it hath passed, so that it be cast into a body which shall live out its time in constant sorrow. ”This is the punishment of him that curseth.”

Section 13. Of the punishment of the slanderer

Mary continued further and said: ”Again, O Master, as to the man that persisteth in slander, when he passeth out of the body, whither shall he go, and what will be his punishment?” Jesus said: ”When the time [marked] by the sphere cometh for a man that persisteth in calumny to pass out of the body, Abiout and Charmôn, the receivers of Ariel, come to draw that soul out of the body, and for three days travel round with it instructing it concerning the creatures of the world. ”Then they take it below into Amenti unto Ariel, that he may chastise it in his torments eleven months and one and twenty days. ”And then they bring it into chaos unto Ialdabaôth and his nine and forty dæmons, that each of his dæmons may assail it for eleven more months and one and twenty days, scourging it with whips of smoke.

”And then they cast it into rivers of smoke and boiling seas of fire, to chastise it therein for eleven more months and one and twenty days. ”After that, they carry it into the way of the midst, that each of the rulers who are in the way of the midst, may chastise it in his torments for eleven months and one and twenty days. ”After that, they take it unto the virgin of light, who judgeth the righteous and sinners, that she may judge it, and, when the sphere turneth, hand it over to her receivers, who will cast it into the æons of the sphere, and the workmen of the sphere will carry it into the lake below the sphere, so that this [lake] becometh a seething fire and eateth into it until it hath mightily purified it. ”And then Ialuham, the receiver of Sabaôth Adamas, bringeth a draught of oblivion, that it may drink it and forget every place and every region through which it hath passed, so that it may be put into another body which shall pass all its time in affliction.

”This is the punishment of the slanderer.” Mary said: ”Woe, woe, unto sinners!”

Section 14. The punishment of the murderer

And Salome spake and said: ”Jesus, Master, [in the case of] a murderer, who hath committed no other sin but that of murder, when he shall pass from the body, what will be his punishment?” Jesus answered and said : ” [In the case of] a murderer, who hath committed no other sin but that of murder, when the time is fulfilled by the sphere for him to pass out of the body, the receivers of Ialdabaôth come to lead his soul out of the body, and bind it by the feet to a great dæmon with the face of a horse, to gallop round with it three days in the world. ” And then it is carried into the regions of ice and snow, to be there chastised for three years and six months. ” And then it is brought into chaos unto Ialdabaôth and his forty and nine dæmons, that each of his dæmons may scourge it for another three years and six months.

” After that it is brought into the chaos unto Persephonê, to be punished in her torments another three years and six months. ” After that it is brought into the way of the midst, that each of the rulers of the midst may punish it in the torments of its regions another three years and six months. ” After that it is brought unto the virgin of light, who judgeth the righteous and sinners, and, when the sphere turneth, she ordereth it to be cast into the outer darkness, until the darkness of the midst shall be removed, so that it may cease to exist and be dissolved. ” This is the punishment of murderers.” Peter said : ” Master, let the women come to an end of their questions, that we also may question thee.” Jesus said unto Mary and the [other] women : ” Give place to your brethren, that they also may question.”

Peter answered and said : ” Again, Master, [in the case of] a thief, that stealeth secretly, and persisteth in his sin, when he passeth out of the body, what is his punishment ?” Jesus said : ”[In the case of] such a man, when his time shall be accomplished by the sphere, the receivers of Adônis come after him, to lead his soul out of the body, and travel round with it three days instructing it in the creatures of the world. ” Then it is carried below into Amenti unto Ariel, that he may chastise it in his torments three months, eight days and two hours. ” Then it is brought into chaos unto Ialdabaôth and his nine and forty dæmons, in order that each of his dæmons may chastise it for another three months, eight days and two hours. ” After that, it is brought into the way of the midst, that each of the rulers of the

way of the midst may chastise it with the smoke of his darkness and his malignant fire for another three months, eight days and two hours.

”After that, it is brought unto the virgin of light, who judgeth the righteous and the sinners, that she may judge it, and, when the sphere turneth, she handeth it over unto her receivers that they may cast it into the æons of the sphere, and bring it unto the lake below the sphere, so that this [lake] becometh a seething fire, which eateth into it, until it is mightily purified. ”Then cometh Ialuham, the receiver of Saba-ôth Adamas, to bring it the draught of oblivion, and give it unto the soul, that it may drink thereof and forget every place and every region through which it hath passed, and be cast into a body lame, halt and blind. ”This is the punishment of the thief.”

Section 15. The punishment of the contemptuous

Andrew spake and said: ”[In the case of] one proud and contemptuous, when he shall have passed out of the body, what shall be done unto him?” Jesus said: ”In the case of such a man, when his time is accomplished by the sphere, the receivers of Ariel come after him to lead out his soul, and travel round the world with it for three days, instructing it in the creatures of the world. ”Then it is brought below into Amenti unto Ariel, that it may be chastised in his torments for twenty months. ” After that, it is brought into the chaos of Ialdabaôth and his nine and forty dæmons, and he and his dæmons, each of them, chastise it another twenty months. ” After that, it is carried into the way of the midst, that each of the rulers of the way of the midst may chastise it for another twenty months.

” And after that, it is brought unto the virgin of light, that she may judge it, and, when the sphere turneth, she handeth it over to her receivers to cast it into the æons of the sphere, and the workmen of the sphere bring it unto the lake below the sphere, so that this lake becometh a seething fire, which eateth into it, until it hath purified it. ” And Ialuham, the receiver of Sabaôth Adamas, cometh to bring it the draught of oblivion and give it to the soul, that it may drink, and forget everything and every region into which it hath entered, and be cast into a body, lame and contemptible, that every one may ever despise it. ” This is the punishment of the proud and contemptuous man.” Thomas said : ” [In the case of] a man that blasphemeth persistently, what is his punishment?”

Jesus said : ” [In the case of] such a man when his time is accomplished by the spheres, the receivers of Ialdabaôth come to bind him by the tongue to a great horse-faced dæmon, and travel round with [that soul] through the world for three days, and punish him. ”Then it is brought into the region of ice and snow, to be punished there for eleven years. ”Then it is carried below into chaos unto Ialdabaôth and his nine and forty dæmons, that each of his dæmons may chastise it for another eleven years. ”Then it is carried into the outer darkness, until the day when the great dragon-faced ruler who encircleth the darkness, shall be judged. And that soul becometh hard frozen, it perisheth and is dissolved. ”This is the punishment of the blasphemer.”

Section 16. The punishment of him that hath intercourse with males

Bartholomew said: ”[In the case of] a man that lieth with a man, what is his punishment?” Jesus said: ”[In the case of] the man that lieth with a man, and the man with whom he lieth, their sentence is the same as that of the blasphemer. ”When the time is fulfilled by the sphere, the receivers of Ialdabaôth come to find their souls, that he and his dæmons may torment them for eleven years. ”Then they are carried into the rivers of fire and seas of seething pitch, full of pig-faced dæmons that eat into them, and . . . them in the rivers of fire another eleven years. ”Then they are carried into the outer darkness until the day of judgment when the great darkness shall be judged; and then they shall be dissolved and perish.” Thomas said: ”We have heard that there are men on the earth who take the sperm of men and the flux of women, and mix them with lentils and eat them, saying, ’We believe in Esau and Jacob.’ Surely this is an unseemly deed?”

Then was Jesus wroth with the world and said unto Thomas: ”Amen, I say, this sin is more heinous than all sins and all iniquities. [As for] men of that kind, they shall be instantly taken into the outer darkness, nor shall they ever be brought back to the sphere, but they shall be destroyed, they shall perish in the outer darkness, in the region where there is no mercy and no light, but weeping and gnashing of teeth. And every soul that shall be [thus] carried into the darkness, shall never again return, but shall perish and be dissolved.” John answered [and said]: ”Again, [in the case of] a man who hath committed no sin, but who hath done righteousness persistently, without finding the mysteries, so as to be able to pass through the rulers, when he shall pass out of the body, what will be done unto him?”

Jesus said: ”[In the case of] such a man, when his time is accomplished by the sphere, the receivers of Chainchôôôch, who is one of the three triple-powered gods, come to find his soul, to lead forth his soul with joy and gladness, and travel round with it three days, instructing it in the creations of the world with joy and gladness. ”Then they bring it below into Amenti to instruct it in the punishments that are in Amenti; they do not chastise it therein, but merely instruct it concerning them. The heat from the fire delayeth it only a little. ”Then it is carried into the way of the midst, to be instructed in the punishments of the ways of the midst; the heat from the fire delaying it a little. ”Then it is brought unto the virgin of light,

that she may judge it, and set it near the little Sabaôth, the good, him of the midst, until the sphere turneth, and Zeus and Aphroditê come before the virgin of light, while Kronos and Arês are behind her.

"Then she taketh the soul of that righteous person to entrust it to her receivers, for them to cast into the æons of the sphere, and for the workmen of the sphere to bring it into a lake below the sphere, so that this [lake] may become a seething fire, and eat into it until it be mightily purified. "Then cometh Ialuham, the receiver of Sabaôth Adamas, who giveth the draught of oblivion unto the souls; he bringeth the draught of oblivion and giveth it unto it, that it may forget everything and every region through which it hath passed.

Section 17. The cup of wisdom

”Then there cometh a receiver of the little Sabaôth, the good, him of the midst; he bringeth a cup full of intuition and wisdom, and also prudence, and giveth it to the soul, casteth the soul into a body which will not be able to fall asleep or forget because of the cup of prudence which hath been given unto it, but will be ever pure in heart and seeking after the mysteries of light, until it hath found them, by order of the virgin of light, in order [that that soul] may inherit the light for ever.” Mary said: ”Again, [in the case of a man] who hath committed all [these] sins and all [these] iniquities, will he suffer all these punishments together?” Jesus answered: ”Yea, he shall suffer them; if he have committed three sins, he shall suffer three punishments.” John said: ”Again, [in the case of] a man who hath committed every sin and every iniquity, but at last hath found the mysteries of light, can he be saved?”

Jesus said: ”Such a man, who hath committed every sin and every iniquity, and hath found the mysteries of light, and hath performed them and accomplished them, and hath not fallen away and committed sin [again], he shall inherit the treasure of light.” Jesus said unto his disciples: ”When the sphere shall turn and Kronos and Arês shall come behind the virgin of light, and Zeus and Aphrodite shall come before her, circling in their own æons, the veils of the virgin shall be drawn aside. In that hour she shall be filled with joy seeing these two stars of light before her, and every soul which at that time she shall cast into the cycle of the æons of the sphere, to descend into the world, shall be righteous and good, and shall find the mysteries of light in that birth, and even if it have to return to birth again, it shall find the mysteries of light.

”But if Arês and Kronos are before the virgin, and Zeus and Aphrodite behind her, so that she doth not see them, then every soul which she casteth into the creatures of the sphere at that time, shall be evil and wrathful and incapable of finding the mysteries of light.” Jesus spake these words unto his disciples in the midst of Amenti; the disciples cried aloud with sobs saying: ”Woe, woe unto sinners, on whom the indifference and forgetfulness of the rulers lie heavily, until they pass out of the body to suffer these torments! Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, son of holiness, that we may be saved from these torments and these judgments which are prepared for sinners, for we also have sinned, O Master, our light.” the righteous. They went forth three by three to the four points of heaven; they preached the gospel of the kingdom in the whole world, the Christ being active with them

in the words of confirmation and the signs and wonders which accompanied them. And thus was known the kingdom of God in all the land and in all the world of Israel, [and this kingdom] is a testimony for all the nations which are from the east even unto the west.

Source. English translation by G. R. S. Mead, from ***Pistis Sophia: a Gnostic Gospel (with extracts from the Books of the Saviour, appended), originally translated from Greek into Coptic and now for the first time Englished from Schwartze's Latin version of the Coptic text***, by G. R. S. Mead (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896); public domain. The text was read by machine (Mistral OCR) from a scan of the 1896 edition at the Internet Archive and has not been proofread against the printed book. SermonIndex has removed running heads and page numbers, joined words split across lines, and divided the text into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Footnotes and the editor's introduction are left out. Mead's introduction, his table of summaries, the list of contents, the advertisements at the end and the scribal note of divine names after the first book are also left out. The headings of the sections are the short summaries that Mead printed in the margin of the book, and the numbers in brackets in the text, which are the page numbers of the Coptic manuscript, are removed. No original-language text is shown beside it, and no modern English version has been made.

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