

THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH

(GTr)

Contents

The Gospel of Truth is a Christian sermon on the theme of salvation by acquaintance with god (*gnōsis*). One of the most brilliantly crafted works of ancient Christian literature, in the original Greek it must have had a rhetorical power that ranked with the great masterpieces of Christian prose. It is the earliest surviving sermon of Christian mysticism. And since very few sermons survive from the ancient gnostic sect and its offshoots, GTr affords a rare glimpse of the actual human atmosphere of a church meeting, in which a magisterial gnostic preacher addresses a congregation, speaking from personal authority. The main themes of the work are established in the opening sentence: search for the father (god) and the hope of deliverance on the part of those who had fallen ignorant and needed a savior to ransom them from ignorance; and emission of the saving divine Word, who proclaimed the truth about the father and brought joy and acquaintance with the father. The contents are thus a dynamic description of Christian *gnōsis* or acquaintance with god.

The characters of this theological drama are simply the *father* (the unknowable god), the *Word* or *son* (god's manifestation), and the *ignorant*, who become transformed into *those who have acquaintance*. The work is overtly Christian, and makes no specific reference to the gnostic myth. It speaks of Jesus' crucifixion as the central object of Christian faith, and contains many paraphrases of New Testament passages.

Two possible states of being are contrasted in GTr: repose (true being, wakefulness) and movement (illusory existence, nightmare). A similar distinction is observed in Platonism, but the basic world view of GTr is not simply Platonist. Rather, the cosmological model of GTr is provided by Stoic pantheistic monism and by astronomy. God (the father) is held to be uncontained and to contain all things. Individuals within him are also said to contain god: thus god permeates, or can permeate, all individual things. Accordingly, the model is not linear (as in gnostic mysticism, cf. Zs, Fr) but three-dimensional and nested, like the ancient astronomical concept of nested heavenly spheres, with god as the most encompassing sphere.

Yet unlike Stoic cosmology, the system of GTr is strongly antimaterialist, even illusionist, as regards the reality of material structures. One consequence of acquaintance (*gnōsis*) with the all-containing divine father is to see the illusion that there are material things—indeed the illusion of distinction and structure—fade away into nothingness. This amounts to reunion with the father; it is salvation, and repose. The main register of GTr is thus not description of the universe but discussion of knowledge and psychology. In this, the concept of salvation in GTr closely resembles that of *The Gospel According to Thomas*. In the few passages where mythic cosmology may covertly come into view (e.g. 17:4f) the figures and events of myth are psychological. In this sense, GTr is to cosmological myth (IrV) as allegory (cf.

the "Historical Introduction" to Part Three) is to text. In this almost complete allegorization, the underlying dynamic of gnostic myth (fullness—lack—recapture of the lacked) is reapplied microcosmically, at the level of the individual Christian.

The theology of GTr uses the simple biblical language of "father" and "son" (or possibly "parent" and "offspring," though 43:11f seems to apply a specifically male anatomical metaphor to the parent). It has been demonstrated that in GTr Valentinus paraphrases, and so interprets, some thirty to sixty scriptural passages, almost all from New Testament books (Gn, Jn, 1 Jn, Rv, Mt, Rm, 1 Co, 2 Co, Ep, Col, and Heb). Of these, it has been shown that the Johannine literature (including Rv) has had the most profound theological influence upon Valentinus's thought; the Pauline literature, less so; and Mt hardly at all. To a large degree the paraphrased passages have been verbally reshaped by abridgement or substitution, to make them agree with Valentinus's own theological perspective (cf. the paraphrase of Gn in RR).

Though carefully controlled, the rhetoric of GTr is not linear but atmospheric, just as its cosmology is not linear but concentric; GTr aims not to argue a thesis by logic, but to describe, evoke, and elicit a kind of relationship. Ideas and images are developed slowly by repeating key points with minor changes. As in gnostic myth a great many epithets used substantively are applied to each main character. Ambiguity of the pronouns "he" and "it" plays a major role in this development; this is one of the striking aspects of Valentinus's style, and can be seen also in the Fragments. Valentinus's style—quite apart from his mystic theology or theory of salvation—is probably unique within ancient Christian literature; it has been described as a gnostic rhetoric.

Literary background

The manuscripts do not specify the title or author of GTr. The conventional title has been supplied by scholarship; it may be a mistake to suppose that Valentinus ever gave a title to the work. In any case, the second-century father of the church, St. Irenaeus of Lyon, states that the Valentinian church read a *Gospel* (or *Proclamation*) of Truth. Since this is the opening phrase of GTr, some scholars have concluded that Irenaeus must be referring to the present work.

The author's name does not appear in the manuscripts, and thus the attribution of GTr to Valentinus remains hypothetical. Nevertheless, it is extremely likely for several reasons: the work's stylistic resemblance to the Fragments (whose attribution is explicit) and the uniqueness of that style; the alleged genius and eloquence of Valentinus and the lack of a likely candidate for the authorship among later Valentinian writers; and the absence of a developed system in the work, perhaps suggesting that it belongs early in the history of the Valentinian church.

The place and exact date of composition of GTr are unknown (Valentinus died ca. 175); the language of composition was Greek.

The work is a sermon and has nothing to do with the Christian genre properly called "gospel" (e.g. the Gospel of Mark).

Text

The original Greek apparently does not survive, though a remark by St. Irenaeus (see above, "Literary background") may be taken as testimony to its existence. The text is known only in Coptic translation, attested by two manuscripts, NHC I (16–43) and NHC XII (fragments), which were copied just before A.D. 350 and are now in the Cairo Coptic Museum. The two Coptic manuscripts contain different versions of the text, one (NHC I) in a Subachmimic dialect of Coptic and the other (NHC XII) in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic. The two versions seem to have been translated from slightly different ancient editions of the Greek text. The Sahidic manuscript (NHC XII) has been almost completely destroyed and survives in the

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form of a few fragments; the Subachmimic manuscript (NHC D) is virtually complete. For that reason, the present translation is from the Subachmimic MS (NHC I) alone.

The translation below is based upon the critical edition of the Coptic by Malinine et al., with some alterations and with improved readings introduced from an unpublished collation of the manuscript made by S. Emmel and kindly supplied by him: M. Malinine et al., *Evangelium Veritatis*, 2-48, and *Evangelium Veritatis [Supplementum]*, 2-8 (see "Select Bibliography").

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THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH^a

Prologue

31 **16** The proclamation^b of the truth is a joy for those who have received
33 grace from the father of truth, •that they might learn to know him^c
through the power of the Word^d that emanated from the fullness^e that is
36 in the father's thought^f and intellect—the Word, •who is spoken of as
"savior": for, that is the term for the work that he^g was to accomplish
1 to ransom those who had fallen ignorant 17 of the father; •while
the term "proclamation" refers to the manifestation of hope, a discovery
for those who are searching for him.

Mk 1:1 ?
IrV (c)
IrV (c)
VFrA
IrV (e)

I. THE ORIGIN OF IGNORANCE

The creation

4 Inasmuch as the entirety^a had searched for the one from whom they
had emanated, and the entirety was inside of him—the inconceivable
9 uncontained, who is superior to all thought^b—ignorance of the father
11 caused agitation and fear. •And the agitation grew dense like fog, so
14 that no one could see. •Thus error^c found strength and labored at her
17 matter^d in emptiness. •Without having learned to know the truth, she
took up residence in a modeled form,^e preparing by means of the power,^f
in beauty, a substitute for truth.

IrV (i)
IrV (b)
29:1, VFrC
Rm 1:21 ?
v.14
VFrC
IrV (g)

The unreality of creation

21,23 Now, to the inconceivable uncontained this was not humiliating; •for
the agitation and forgetfulness and the modeled form of deception were
as nothing, whereas established truth is unchangeable, imperturbable,
28 and cannot be beautified. •For this reason despise error, since she has
no root.^g

Forgetfulness

30 She dwelt in a fog as regards the father, preparing, while she dwelt
33 there, products and forgetfulness and fears, •so that by them she might

16 a. Or "*The Proclamation of Truth*." No title is given in the MSS. The present title has been supplied by modern scholars, following a statement by St. Irenaeus (cf. the introduction to GTr).

b. "proclamation" (Gk. *euaggelion*): the Greek word can be translated also "gospel." The title plays on this double meaning.

c. "father . . . him" (or "parent . . . it"): traditional anthropomorphic Christian language for reference to the highest deity is used in this work.

d. "Word" (Gk. *Logos*): or "verbal expression."

e. "fullness": Valentinian jargon for the spiritual universe.

f. Or "thinking"; cf. BJn 4:26f.

g. "he" (or "it"): traditional Christian anthropomorphic language for reference to the mediating principle (Word, son) is used in this work.

17 a. "entirety": gnostic jargon for the sum total of spiritual reality deriving from the Barbēlō aeon or second principle; here it refers especially to spiritual reality as alienated from its source.

b. Cf. BJn 3:22–26.

c. "error": a feminine personification corresponding to both wisdom and Ialdabaōth in gnostic myth. The present section (17:4–17f) is an allegorical equivalent of the production of Ialdabaōth and the creation of the universe and humankind in gnostic myth.

d. "her matter": the material universe, which belonged to error.

e. Jewish and Christian jargon for the human body, based on the fact that the creator modeled Adam out of earth. The word (Gk. *plasma*) also means "fiction, fabrication."

f. "the power": cf. BJn 10:20f.

g. "root": source.

36 beguile those of the middle^b and take them captive. •The forgetfulness that belongs to error is not apparent; it is not (?) 18 [. . .] with the
 1 father. •It was not in the father's company that forgetfulness arose, and
 4 surely then not because of him! •Rather, what comes into being within
 him is acquaintance, which appeared so that forgetfulness might perish
 7 and the father might come to be known. •Inasmuch as forgetfulness
 arose because the father was unknown, from the moment the father
 comes to be known, there will no longer be forgetfulness.

II. DISCOVERY OF THE FATHER

The crucified Jesus is god within

11 It is to the perfect^a that this, the proclamation of the one they search Col 1:25
 15 for, has made itself known, through the mercies of the father. •By this
 the hidden mystery Jesus Christ shed light upon those who were, because VFrH
 18 of forgetfulness, in darkness. •He enlightened them and gave them a Jn 14:6
 21 way, and the way is the truth, about which he instructed them. •For
 23 this reason error became angry at him and persecuted him. •She was
 24 constrained by him, and became inactive. •He was nailed to a tree^b and Gn 2:17
 26 became fruit of the father's acquaintance. •Yet it did not cause ruin Gn 3:7
 27 because it was eaten. •Rather, to those who ate of it, it gave the
 possibility that whoever he discovered within himself might be joyful in
 31 the discovery of him. •And as for him, they discovered him within
 them—the inconceivable uncontained, the father, who is perfect, who 19:7, Col 1:16
 created the entirety.

Existence within the father

34 Because the entirety was within him and the entirety was in need of
 him^c—since he had retained within himself its completion, which he had
 not given unto the entirety—the father was not grudging; for what envy
 40 is there between him and his own members? •For if 19 this realm had
 [. . .] them, they would not be able to [. . .] the father, retaining their
 completion within himself, in that it [was] given them in the form of
 7 return to him and acquaintance and completion. •It is he who created 18:31
 9 the entirety, and the entirety is in him. •And the entirety was in need Col 1:16
 10 of him: •just as someone who is unknown to certain people might wish
 14 to become known, and so become loved, by them. •For what did the
 entirety need if not acquaintance with the father?

The savior as teacher

17,19 He became a guide,^a at peace and occupied with classrooms. •He
 21 came forward and uttered the word as a teacher. •The self-appointed
 wise people came up to him, testing him, but he refuted them, for they
 were empty; and they despised him, for they were not truly intelligent.

h. I.e. ordinary Christians (?). In later Valentinian theology, "the middle" is the realm of the "just," who can waver between good and evil, as distinct from the realm of the spirituals (Valentinians) and the father; cf. IrPt 1.7.1 Valentinus's own teaching on this subject is unknown.

but here also contrasted with the tree of acquaintance with good and evil, Gn 2:17, which in the non-gnostic reading "caused ruin" to Eve and Adam.

c. "in need of him": had a lack of him, cf. note 24a.

18. a. "the perfect": the elect, who have been chosen for salvation.

b. "a tree": Christian jargon for the cross,

19. a. Or "pedagogue," a trained slave who accompanied schoolchildren to the classroom and supervised their conduct.

27 After them all, came also the little ones, to whom belongs acquaintance 43:22+
 30 with the father. •Once they were confirmed and had learned about the
 outward manifestations of the father they gained acquaintance, they
 were known; they were glorified, they gave glory.

III. PREDESTINATION TO SALVATION

The book of the living

34 In their hearts appeared the living book of the living, which is written 32:31 +
 1 in the father's thought and intellect. 20 •And since the foundation of the VFrG
 3 entirety it had been among his incomprehensibles: •and no one had been Rv 13:8
 able to take it up, inasmuch as it was ordained that whoever should take Rv 5:3
 6 it up would be put to death. •Nothing would have been able to appear
 among those who believed in salvation, had not that book come forward.

The crucifixion and publication of the book

10 Therefore the merciful and faithful Jesus became patient and accepted Heb 2:17
 the sufferings even unto taking up that book: inasmuch as he knew that Rv 5:7
 14 his death would mean life for many. •Before a will^a is opened, the extent Mi 20:28
 of the late property owner's fortune remains a secret; just so, the entirety Heb 9:17 ?
 19 was concealed. •Since the father of the entirety is invisible—and the
 entirety derives from him, from whom every way emanated—Jesus
 appeared, wrapped himself in that document, was nailed to a piece of Col 2:14
 27 wood, and published the father's edict upon the cross. •O, such a great
 28 lesson! •Drawing himself down unto death, clothed in eternal life, having
 put off the corrupt rags,^b he put on incorruptibility, a thing that no one
 34 can take from him. •Having entered upon the empty ways of fear, he
 escaped the clutches of those who had been stripped naked by forget-
 38 fulness, •for he was acquaintance and completion, and read out [their]
 1.3 contents 21 [. . .]. •When [. . .] instruct whoever might learn. •And
 those who would learn, [namely] the living enrolled in the book of the
 living, learn about themselves, recovering themselves from the father,
 and returning to him.

ICo 15:53
 Ph 2:8 ?
 IrV (c)
 Jn 10:17

Predestination of the elect

8 Inasmuch as the completion of the entirety is in the father, the entirety
 11 must go to him. •Then upon gaining acquaintance, all individually receive
 14 what belongs to them, and draw it to themselves.^a •For whoever does
 not possess acquaintance is in need, and what that person needs is great, VFrD
 inasmuch as the thing that such a person needs is what would complete
 18 the person.^b •Inasmuch as the completion of the entirety resides in the
 23 father, and the entirety must go to him and all receive their own, •he
 inscribed these things in advance, having prepared them for assignment
 to those who (eventually) emanated from him. Jn 12:32
 VFrF

Calling of the elect

25 Those whose names he foreknew were called at the end, as persons Rm 8:29
 28 having acquaintance. •It is the latter whose names the father called. VFrH

20 a. Or "testament."

b. "corrupt rags": it was a Platonist cliché that the human body is the garment of the soul.

21 a. "and draw it to themselves": or "and he draws them to himself."

b. "what would complete the person": or "what would complete him."

- 30 For one whose name has not been spoken does not possess acquaintance.
 32 How else would a person hear, if that person's name had not been read Jn 10:3 ?
 34 out? •For whoever lacks acquaintance until the end, is a modeled form
 37 of forgetfulness, and will perish along with it. •Otherwise, why do these
 1 contemptible persons have no 22 name? •Why do they not possess the
 faculty of speech?

Response to the call

- 2.4 So that whoever has acquaintance is from above: •and if called, hears, Jn 3:31 ?
 7 replies, and turns to the one who is calling; and goes to him. •And he
 9 knows how that one is called.^a •Having acquaintance, that person does
 11 the will of the one who has called; •wishes to please him; and gains
 12.13 repose. •One's name becomes one's own. •Those who gain acquaintance
 in this way know whence they have come and whither they will go; Jn 3:8
 16 they know in the manner of a man who, after having been intoxicated,
 18 has recovered from his intoxication: •having returned into himself, he
 has caused his own to stand at rest.^b Jn 10:4 ?
 20 He has brought many back from error, going before them unto their
 ways from which they had swerved after accepting error because of the
 depth of him who surrounds every way, while nothing surrounds him.
 27 It was quite amazing that they were in the father without being acquainted
 with him and that they alone were able to emanate, inasmuch as they
 were not able to perceive and recognize the one in whom they were.

Contents of the book

- 33.35 For had not his will emanated from him (. . .)• For he revealed it to
 38 bestow an acquaintance in harmony with all its emanations, •that is to
 say, acquaintance with the living book, an acquaintance which at the
 end appeared to the 23 aeons^a in the form of [passages of text from] it.
 2.3 When it is manifest, they speak: •they are not places for use of the
 voice, nor are they mute texts for someone to read out and so think of
 8 emptiness; •rather, they are texts of truth, which speak and know only
 11 themselves. •And each text is a perfect truth—like a book that is perfect
 and consists of texts written in unity, written by the father for the aeons:
 so that through its passages of text the aeons might become acquainted
 with the father.

IV. SALVATION

The advent of the Word

- 18 Its^b wisdom meditates upon the Word.
 20 Its teaching speaks him^c forth.
 21 Its acquaintance has revealed (him).^d
 23 Its forbearance is a crown upon him.
 24 Its joy is in harmony with him.

22 a. Or "he knows how he is called."

b. To "stand at rest" is philosophical jargon for the state of permanence, non-change, and real being, as opposed to what exists in instability, change, and becoming.

c. One or more words are inadvertently omitted here.

23 a. Or "eternal realms." In gnostic myth, the aeons are emanations of the first principle

and compose the structure of the spiritual universe, which contains only aeons.

b. "Its": here and throughout the passage (23:18–31f) the Coptic word also can be translated "His."

c. "him": here and throughout the passage (23:18–31f) the Coptic word can be translated also "it."

d. Through an inadvertence, the MS omits this word.

- 26 Its glory has exalted him.
 27 Its manner has manifested him.
 29 Its repose has taken him to itself.
 30 Its love has clothed him with a body.
 31 Its faith has guarded him.

Ingathering of the elect

- 33 In this manner the Word of the father goes forth in the entirety, being the fruition 24 [of] his heart and an outward manifestation of his will, personally supporting the entirety and choosing it, and also taking the 6 outward manifestation of the entirety and purifying it, •bringing it back into the father, into the mother, Jesus of the infinity of sweetness. 42:16
 9 And the father uncovers his bosom—now, his bosom is the holy spirit, Jn 1:18
 14 and reveals his secret—his secret is his son, •so that out of the father's bowels they (the entirety) might learn to know him, and the aeons might no longer be weary from searching for the father, might repose in him, 20 and might know that he is repose, •for he has supplied the lack^a and 22 nullified the realm of appearance. •The realm of appearance, which belongs to it (the lack), is the world, in which it served. 1Co 7:31b ? VFrf

Disappearance of the material world

- 25 For where there is envy and strife there is a lack, but where unity is, 28 there is completion. •Inasmuch as the lack came into being because the father was not known, from the moment that the father is known the 32 lack will not exist. •As with one person's ignorance (of another)—when one becomes acquainted, ignorance of the other passes away of its own 37 accord; •and as with darkness, which passes away when light appears: 1 25 so also lack passes away in completion, and so from that moment on, the realm of appearance is no longer manifest but rather will pass away in the harmony of unity.
 7.8 For now their affairs are dispersed. •But when unity makes the ways complete, it is in unity that all will gather themselves, and it is by acquaintance that all will purify themselves out of multiplicity into unity, consuming matter within themselves as fire, and darkness by light, and 19 death by life. •So since these things have happened to each of us, it is 22 fitting for us to meditate upon the entirety, •so that this house might be holy and quietly intent on unity. 2Co 5:4 ?

A parable of jars

- 25,27 It is like some people who moved to a new house. •They had some jars that in places were no good, and these got broken; but the owner of the house suffered no loss, rather the owner was glad because instead of the bad jars it was (now) the full ones that they would be going to 35 use up. •For this is the judgment that has come 26 from above, having judged everyone—a drawn two-edged sword cutting this way and that, since the Word that is in the heart of those that speak it, has come Jn 3:19 Heb 4:12 ? Jn 1:14
 7.8 forward. •It is not just a sound, but it became a body. •A great disturbance has come to pass among the jars; for some have leaked dry, some are half full, some are well filled, some have been spilled, some have been washed, and still others broken.

24 a. "lack": in gnostic myth, the missing wisdom. In GTr the lack is mutual, between power stolen by Ialdabaöth from its mother the divine fullness and the individual aeon.

Lament and downfall of error

15 All the ways moved and were disturbed, for they had neither basis
 18,20 nor stability; •and error became excited, not knowing what to do; •[she]
 was troubled, mourned, and cried out that she understood nothing,
 inasmuch as acquaintance, which meant the destruction of her and all
 26 her emanations, had drawn near to her. •Error is empty, with nothing
 27 inside her. •Truth came forward: all its emanations recognized it, and
 they saluted the father in truth and power (so) perfect that it set them
 32 in harmony with the father. •For everyone loves truth since truth is the
 35,36 father's mouth; •his tongue is the holy spirit. •Whoever attaches 27 to
 2 the truth attaches to the father's mouth; •it is from his tongue that this
 person will receive the holy spirit, that is to say, the revealing of the
 7 father and the uncovering of him to his aeons. •He has revealed his
 9 secret; he has unloosed himself.^a •For who but the father alone contains
 (anything)?

IrV (j)
VFrB

Col 1:26

Potential being and real being

10,11 All the ways^b are his emanations. •They know that they have emanated
 from him like children who were within a mature man but knew they
 18 had not yet received form nor been given name. •It is when they receive
 the impulse toward acquaintance with the father that he gives birth to
 22 each. •Otherwise, although they are within him they do not recognize
 23 him. •The father himself is perfect and acquainted with every way that
 26 is in him. •If he wills, what he wills appears, as he gives it form and
 29 name. •And he gives it name, and causes it to make them come into
 existence.
 31 Those who have not yet come to be are not acquainted with the one
 34 who put them in order. •Now, I am not saying that those who have not
 36 yet come to be are nothing: •rather, that they exist 28 within him who
 might will that they come to be, if he wills at some future time, as it
 4 were. •Before all things have appeared he is personally acquainted with
 7 what he is going to produce. •But the fruit that has not yet appeared
 10 recognizes nothing, nor is it at all active. •Just so, also all the ways that
 13 reside in the father derive from the existent, •that being which has
 16 caused itself to stand at rest from out of the nonexistent. •For what has
 18 no root also has no fruit: •truly, although it may think to itself, "I have
 22 come into being," next it will wither of its own accord. •Accordingly,
 24 what was wholly nonexistent will not come into being. •What then does
 26 he want it to think? •This: "I have come into being (only) in the manner
 28 of shadows and apparitions of the night." •O the light's shining on the
 fear of that person, upon knowing that it is nothing!

Mt 5:48
Jn 3:20

The nightmare state and awakening

32 Thus they were unacquainted with the father, since it was he whom
 1 29 they did not see. •Inasmuch as he was the object of fear and
 disturbance and instability and indecisiveness and division, there was
 much futility at work among them on his account, and (much) empty
 8 ignorance—•as when one falls sound asleep and finds oneself in the
 11 midst of nightmares: •running toward somewhere—powerless to get
 away while being pursued—in hand-to-hand combat—being beaten—

17:9+

27 a. Or "he has explained it" (with this translation cf. possibly Jn 1:18).

b. "ways": this obscure term apparently refers to the aeons or potential aeons.

falling from a height—being blown upward by the air, but without any
 20 wings; •sometimes, too, it seems that one is being murdered, though
 nobody is giving chase—or killing one's neighbors, with whose blood
 25 one is smeared: •until, having gone through all these dreams, one
 28 awakens. •Those in the midst of all these troubles see nothing, for such
 32 things are (in fact) nothing. •Such are those who have cast off lack of
 acquaintance from themselves like sleep, considering it to be nothing.
 37 Neither do they consider its 30 other products to be real things.
 2 Rather, they put them away like a dream in the night, and deem
 6 acquaintance with the father to be the light. •That is how each person
 10 acted while being without acquaintance: as though asleep. •And the
 12 person who has acquaintance is like one who has awakened. •And good
 14 for the person who returns and awakens! •And blessed is the one who
 has opened the eyes of the blind!

42:37
 VFrH
 Gn 3:5 ?

16 And the quick spirit hastened after that person when the person had
 19 awakened; •having helped the one who lay prostrate on the ground, it
 made that one strong enough to stand up; for that person had not yet
 arisen.

VFrC

V. THE FATHER'S INTERVENTION

Mediation of the son

23 Acquaintance from the father and the appearance of his son gave
 26 them a means to comprehend. •For when they saw and heard him, he
 32 let them taste and smell of himself and touch the beloved son, •after he
 had appeared to tell them about the father, the uncontained, and had
 breathed into them what was in the thought^a (of the father), doing his
 36 will. •When many had received the light, they converted 31 to him,
 1 for they were strangers and did not see his image and had not recognized
 him.

Jn 1:1 ?

Jn 20:22 ?
 Gn 2:7 ?
 Jn 6:38

4,4 Matter (. . .)^a •for he had come out of it in a fleshly likeness without
 7 anything's blocking his progress—for incorruptibility is tantamount to
 9 unseizability^b—speaking moreover in new terms while yet speaking
 11 about what was in the father's heart, •for he had produced the Word
 15 that has no defect; and light spoke forth from his mouth. •And his voice
 16 gave birth to life. •He gave them thought and intelligence and mercy
 and salvation and the powerful spirit from the father's infinity and
 21,22 sweetness, •having made punishments and torments cease: •for it was
 26 they who had gone astray from the presence of certain others, who fell
 26 short of mercy, in error and bondage.^c •And, allied with power, he
 unchained them and reproved them by acquaintance.

Rm 8:3

A parable of sheep

28 He became a way for those who had gone astray and acquaintance
 31 for those who were without acquaintance; •discovery for those who
 34 were seeking, and strength for those who were trembling; •purity for
 35 those who were defiled: •since it is he who is the shepherd^d who left
 2 behind the ninety-nine 32 sheep that had not gone astray, •and came
 3 and searched for the one that had gone astray. •He rejoiced when he
 4 found it, •for 99 is a number expressed with a gesture of the left hand.

Jn 14:6

Mt 18:12

30 a. Or "thinking."

c. "bondage": a Platonist cliché for the material body.

31 a. One or more words are inadvertently omitted here.

d. "the" shepherd known to readers from Mt 18:12f.

b. Cf. RR 87:17f.

- 6.9 But when 1 is found, the sum total transfers to the right hand.^a •In this way the thing that is in need of one, namely the whole right hand, draws what is missing, and takes it from the left-hand part so that it transfers
 15,16 to the right hand. •And thus the number becomes 100. •This is a symbol
 17 of the spoken forms of these numbers. •The father is he who, even on the Sabbath, when the sheep^b that he had found had fallen into the ditch, labored over it and kept the sheep alive, once he had brought it up from the ditch. Mt 12:11
- 22,38 Understand the interior meaning,^c •for it is you who are the children
 23 of interior understanding. •What is the Sabbath? That day on which
 26 salvation cannot be idle. •Speak from (the perspective of) the superior
 29 day, in which there is no night; •and from the star that does not set,
 31 since it is perfect. •Speak, therefore, from the heart, for it is you who
 are the day that is perfect, and it is within you that there dwells the
 35 star that does not set. •Speak of the truth with those who seek it,
and of acquaintance with those who have sinned in the midst of their error.^d **33** 43:22 +
Rv 21:25
19:34
VFrG
VFrH

VI. DUTIES OF THE ELECT

- 1.2 Make steady the feet of those who have stumbled, •and stretch out
 3,4 your hands to those who are sick. •Feed those who are hungry, •and
 5 unto those who are weary give repose; •and awaken those who wish to
 7,8 arise, •and get up from your sleep. •For it is you who are unsheathed
 9 intelligence. •If strengthening is thus, it is truly strong. Mt 11:28
- 11,12 Focus your attention upon yourselves. •Do not focus your attention
 13,14 upon others,^a that is, •ones whom you have expelled. •Do not return to
 16 eat what you have vomited forth. •Do not become eaten by moths; do
 17 not become infested with worms; •for you have already cast him^b out. Mt 6:19
- 19 Do not become the place of the devil, for you have already brought him
 22 to naught. •Do not strengthen the elements that impede you—those who
 24 fall—supposing that this is a kind of improvement. •For the lawless is
 24,26 nothing. •Treat such a one more forceably than the just, •since the
 lawless acts on the supposition of being lawless, while the just acts
 30 toward others on the supposition of being just. •For your own part,
 then, do the will of the father, for you are from him. Ep 4:27
VFrF

VII. THE FATHER AND THE ELECT

The father's fragrance

- 33,35 For the father is sweet and in his will is goodness; •he is acquainted
 37 with your own, upon whom you rely. •For by their fruits your own are
 39 known: •for the father's children **34** are themselves his fragrance, for
 3 they are from the loveliness of his face. •Therefore the father loves his 36:35 +
Mt 7:16
Mt 7:20
2Co 2:14

32 a. The Romans used a system of numerical gestures, in which one to ninety-nine could be expressed by *ninety-nine different* postures of the left hand alone. Starting with one hundred, the postures were made by fingers of the right hand. Thus ninety-nine is "a number expressed with a gesture of the left hand," while one hundred is a right-hand gesture. Independent of these numerical gestures, the "left" was superstitiously considered to be sinister, and the "right" auspicious. Thus the "transfer" of the numerical gesture to the right hand is an auspicious

change.

b. "the" sheep known to readers from Mt 12:11.

c. In the MS the rest of this sentence is written on the thirty-eighth line of the page with an indication that it had been inadvertently omitted and should be inserted between lines 22 and 23.

d. For line 38, see above after line 22.

33 a. Or "other things."

b. Or "it."

5 fragrance and manifests it everywhere. •And when it mingles with matter
 7 it imparts his fragrance to the light, •and by his silence he makes it IrV (b)
 9 superior in every way to every sound. •For it is not the ears that smell
 10 the fragrance, •rather it is the spirit^a that possesses the faculty of smell
 and draws the fragrance toward itself for itself and sinks down into the
 14 father's fragrance; •thus it nourishes it and takes it to what^b it emanated
 18 from, the original cold fragrance. •And it is a soul-endowed modeled
 22 form, being like a cold liquid that has sunk into some loose earth; •and
 24 those who see it suppose that (only) earth is there. •Afterward, it
 reevaporates when a gust (of wind) draws it off and it becomes warm.
 26,28 Cold fragrances, then, result from division. •For this reason, faith came
 and did away with division, and it brought the warm fullness of love,
 33 so that coldness might not return: •rather, it is unity of perfect thought.
 Gn 2:7 ?
 1Co 15:45 ?

The father's restoration of the lack

34 This is the account of the good news about the discovery of the
 fullness, for those who strain toward 35 the salvation coming from
 2 above. •Their hope, toward which they strain, is straining (toward them); VFrH
 4,6 it is their image, the light in which there is no shadow. •How truly at
 8 that time the fullness is on the way to coming! •The lack belonging to
 the realm of matter did not result from the infinity of the father as he
 12 came to bestow time upon the lack. •Of course, it could not properly
 14 be said that the incorruptible would "come" in such a way. •Rather,
 the father's depth is immense, and it is not with him that the thought of IrV (e)
 18 error resides. •It is a fallen (?)^a thing, that can easily be made upright
 through the discovery of him who came to that which he would bring
 back.
 22,24 For the restoration is called repentance. •The reason why incorrup-
 tibility exhaled and followed the one who had sinned, was so that that
 27 one might gain repose. •For the remainder of the light, within the lack,
 30 is forgiveness—the Word of the fullness. •For, a doctor hurries to where
 33 sickness is;^b that is the doctor's wish. •A person who has something
 wrong, then, will not hide the fact, for the one has what the other needs.
 35 Thus the fullness, which has no defect, supplies such a person's lack
 (with)^c what it has 36 bestowed so as to supply what that person needs,
 3 so that the person might thus receive grace. •While in need, this person
 5 did not have grace. •For this reason, it was diminution that resided
 8 where there was no grace. •When the diminished portion was received,
 11 the one who needed it was manifestly a fullness. •And this is the
 discovery about the light of truth that has risen upon such a person:
 that it is unchangeable.

Anointment of the elect

13 Because of the coming of Christ (the anointed) it was said publicly:
 15 Seek, and those that are disturbed will receive restoration, and he will
 17 anoint them with ointment. •The ointment is the mercy of the father,
 Mt 7:7 ?
 Jn 2:27 ?
 GTh 2 ?

34 a. Or "wind current," perhaps meaning
 breath; Gk. *pneuma*.

b. Or "where."

35 a. Translation uncertain.

b. This saying is attributed to Jesus by St.
 Ephraem Syrus, a fourth-century father of

the Syrian church (*Syr. Evang. Concord.
 Expos.*, chap. 17); in A. Resch's collection
 of sayings attributed to Jesus that are not in
 the canonical New Testament (*Agrapha*
 [Leipzig: Henrichs, 1906]) it counts as no.
 176 [A76].

c. Through an inadvertence, the MS omits
 this word.

who will be merciful to them; and those whom he has anointed are the
 21.22 perfected. •For it is full jars that get coated (with sealing wax). •But
 whenever some jar's coating is ruined it leaks, and the cause of its
 27 defectiveness lies in the fact of its not being coated: •for in such a case
 a gust (of wind) and the power of what is with it will make it evaporate.
 29 While from the one that has no defects, no seals are broken; neither do
 33 such ones leak in any way. •Rather the father, since he is perfect,
 resupplies it with anything it lacks.

An allegory of paradise

35.35 He is good. •He is acquainted with his plants, for it is he who has
 38 planted them in his paradise (garden). •Now, his paradise is his realm
 39 of repose: •it 37 is the perfection within the father's thought, and they
 4 (his plants) are the verbal expressions of his meditation.^a •Each of his
 verbal expressions is the product of his will and the manifestation of his
 speaking.
 7 Since the time when they constituted the depth of his thought, uttered
 discourse has manifested them, and intellect uttering the discourse, and
 12 silent loveliness. •It (the discourse) was called thought, inasmuch as
 15 they dwelled in it (silent loveliness) without becoming manifest. •So it
 came to pass that it was uttered in the beginning, when it pleased the
 will of him who willed.

33:33, 43:19
 VFr H +
 IrV (j), VFr 6
 Gn 2:15 ?

The father's incomprehensible will

19.20 Now, will is what the father reposes in. •And nothing comes to pass
 without what pleases him, nor does anything happen without the father's
 24.25 will. •Rather, his will is incomprehensible. •His will is his imprint, and
 27 no one can understand him; •nor does he exist so that they might observe
 29 him in order to lay hold of him. •Rather, when he wills, what he wills
 is this—even if the sight is not at all pleasing in the presence of god: the
 34 father's will. •For he is acquainted with the beginning and the end of
 36.37 all. •For at their end he will greet them. •Now, the end is reception of
 1 acquaintance with him who is hidden, and he is the father, 38 •from
 whom the beginning came and to whom all who emanated from him will
 4 return. •And they appeared so that there might be glory and joy in his
 name.

Mt 10:29 ?

VIII. THE FATHER AND THE SON

The father's name

6.7 Now, the name of the father is the son. •It is he who in the beginning
 10 named what emanated from him, remaining always the same. •And he
 12 begot him as a son and gave him his name, which he possessed. •It is
 14 he in whose vicinity the father has all things: •he has the name, and he
 15.16 has the son. •The latter can be seen; •but the name is invisible, for it
 alone is the mystery of the invisible, which comes into ears that are
 21 wholly full of it, because of him. •And yet the father's name is not
 23.24 spoken. •Rather, it is manifest in a son. •Thus, great is the name!
 25 Who, then, can utter his name, the great name, but him alone who

Heb 1:5

Jn 17:11

37 a. Possibly a reuse of the allegorical interpretation of Gn 2:8, by the brilliant exegete of Alexandria, Philo Judaeus (ca. 30 B.C.–A.D. ca. 45) as found in his *Questions and Answers on Genesis* 1.6 (trans. R. Marcus;

Philo, Supplement 1; Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953): "And His ideas the Creator planted like trees in the most sovereign thing, the rational soul."

possesses the name—and the children of the name in whom the father's
 32 name reposed and who in turn reposed in his name! •Inasmuch as the
 father is unengendered, it is he who alone bore him unto himself, as a
 36 name, before he had put the aeons in order, •so that the name of the
 38 father might be supreme over them as lord. •And this is the 39 true
 3 name, confirmed by his command in perfect power. •For this name does
 not result from words and acts of naming, but rather his name is invisible.

7 He alone gave him a name, for he alone saw him, and it was he alone
 11 who was able to name him: •for what does not exist has no name—
 indeed, what would a nonexistent be named?—but what exists, exists
 16 along with its name. •And he alone is acquainted with him and (. . .)^a
 19 for him alone to give him a name. •He is the father: his name is the son.
 20,23 So he did not hide it within action, rather it existed. •The son alone
 24 gave names. •So the name belongs to the father, just as the name of the
 27 father is the son, the beloved. •For where would he find a name except
 from the father?

Rv 19:12 ?

28 Yet perhaps someone will say to another, “Who could name one that
 33 preexisted before him? •Do not children get names 40 from their
 2 parents?” •First, we must consider the question of what sort of thing a
 5,6 name is. •For he is the true name. •Thus it is he who is the name from
 9 the father; for it is he who exists as the most lordly name. •Accordingly,
 he did not get the name on loan—unlike others, all of whom individually
 13 get their names according as they are created. •But this one is the most
 14 lordly name. •There is no other being that bestowed it upon him.
 16 Rather, he is unnameable and indescribable until such time as the perfect
 20 alone has spoken of him. •And it is the latter who is able to speak his
 name and see him.

23 So when it pleased him that his uttered name should be his son, and
 when he who had emanated from the depth gave him his name he spoke
 30 of his secrets, knowing that the father is without evil. •Precisely for
 this reason he produced him—so that he might speak concerning the place
 from which he had emanated and his realm of repose, 41 and that he
 might glorify the fullness, the greatness of his name, and the father's
 sweetness.

IX. REPOSE

Proclamation of the place of repose

3 All, individually, will speak concerning the place from which they
 have emanated and the lot according to which they have received their
 7 establishment in the state of rest. •They will hasten to return and to
 receive from that place in which they (once) stood at rest, tasting of it
 and being nourished and growing.

Repose in the father

12,14 And his own realm of repose is his^a fullness. •Thus all the father's
 16 emanations are fullnesses; •and he is the root of all his emanations,
 within that (place) where he caused all to sprout and gave them their
 20 destinies. •So each is manifest in order that from their own thought
 23 (. . .)^b •For they send their thought to where their root is, their root
 which carries them up above all the heights to the father.

39 a. The Coptic text is corrupt; one or more words may be inadvertently omitted here.

41 a. “his . . . his”: or “their . . . their.”
 b. One or more words are inadvertently omitted here.

- 28,30 They cling to his head, which is repose for them. •And they hold themselves close to him so that, as it were, they receive from his face something like kisses, although they do not give 42 this impression.
- 2 For they have neither surpassed themselves nor fallen short of the glory of the father. •And they do not think of him as trivial or bitter or 6 wrathful: •rather, that he is without evil, imperturbable, sweet, acquainted with all ways before they have come into being. •And he does 11 not need to be instructed. •Such are they who have possessions from above, from the immeasurable greatness, straining toward the solitary 16,17 and perfect, •he who is a mother to them. •And they will not descend into Hades, nor do they have envy or groaning; nor is death within 21 them. •Rather, they repose in that being who gives unto himself repose, and in the vicinity of truth they are neither weary nor entangled.
- 25,26 But it is precisely they who are the truth. •And it is in them that the father dwells, and in the father that they are, being perfect, undivided in what is truly good, and imparting no defect to anything, but rather 33 imparting repose and being fresh in spirit. •And it is to their root that they will listen, being occupied with the things in which one might find one's root and not damage one's soul.

Conclusion

- 37,39 This is the place of the blessed. This is their place. •As for the others, then, let them know in their own places that it is not right for me 43 to 2 say more, for I have been in the place of repose. •No, it is there that I 5 shall dwell, continually occupied with the father of the entirety •and the true siblings, upon whom the father's love is poured out and in whose midst there is no lack of him; who truly and obviously dwell in true and 11 eternal life, •and speak of the light that is perfect and full of the father's 16 seed, and which is in his heart and in the fullness. •In this his spirit 19 rejoices, and it glorifies what it dwelt in. •For he is good, and his children 22 are perfect and worthy of his name. •Truly, it is children of this kind that the father loves.