

Gnosticism

Pistis Sophia

Translated by G.R.S. Mead (1921)

The Pistis Sophia is a Gnostic text dated to roughly 150-300 AD. It tells the story of a fallen angel and the restoration of her "light" by Jesus. The major themes include faith in the highest light (The First Mystery- God), repentance, and equation of finding the inner light with salvation. For more, see: www.sacred-texts.com/chr/ps/index.htm.

Chapter 2

And that light-power came down over Jesus and surrounded him entirely, while he was seated removed from his disciples, and he had shone most exceedingly, and there was no measure for the light which was on him.

And the disciples had not seen Jesus because of the great light in which he was, or which was about him; for their eyes were darkened because of the great light in which he was. But they saw only the light, which shot forth many light-rays. And the light-rays were not like one another, but the light was of divers kind, and it was of divers type, from below upwards, one [ray] more excellent than the other, . . . , in one great immeasurable glory of light; it stretched from under the earth right up to heaven.--And when the disciples saw that light, they fell into great fear and great agitation.

Chapter 6

It came to pass then, when the disciples had heard this word, that they said: "Lord, if it be thou, withdraw thy light-glory into thyself that we may be able to stand; otherwise our eyes are darkened, and we are agitated, and the whole world also is in agitation because of the great light which is about thee."

Then Jesus drew to himself the glory of his light; and when this was done, all the disciples took courage, stepped forward to Jesus, fell down all together, adored him, rejoicing in great joy, and said unto him: "Rabbi, whither hast thou gone, or what was thy ministry on which thou hast gone, or wherefor rather were all these confusions and all the earth-quakings which have taken place?"

Then Jesus, the compassionate, said unto them: "Rejoice and exult from this hour on, for I have gone to the regions out of which I had come forth. From this day on then will I discourse with you in openness, from the beginning of the Truth unto its completion; and I will discourse with you face to face without similitude. From this hour on will I not hide anything from you of the [mystery] of the height and of that of the region of Truth. For authority hath been given me through the Ineffable and through the First Mystery of all mysteries to speak with you, from the



Beginning right up to the Fulness,. both from within without and from without within. Hearken, therefore, that I may tell you all things.

Chapter 7

For which cause I have said unto you indeed from the beginning that ye are not of the world. I also am not of it. For all men who are in the world have gotten their souls out of [the power of] the rulers of the æons. But the power which is in you is from me; your souls belong to the height.

Chapter 10

O Mystery, which is without in the world, for whose sake the universe hath arisen,--this is the total outgoing and the total ascent, which hath emanated all emanations and all that is therein and for whose sake all mysteries and all their regions have arisen,--come hither unto us, for we are thy fellow-members. We are all with thyself; we are one and the same. Thou art the First Mystery, which existed from the beginning in the Ineffable before it came forth; and the name thereof are we all.

Chapter 19

Now when Mary had heard the Saviour speak these words, she exulted greatly, and she came before Jesus, fell down before him, adored his feet and said unto him: "My Lord, hearken unto me, that I may question thee on this word, before that thou discoursest with us about the regions whither thou didst go."

Jesus answered and said unto Mary: "Discourse in openness and fear not; all things on which thou questionest, I will reveal unto thee."

Chapter 32

And Pistis Sophia cried out most exceedingly, she cried to the Light of lights which she had seen from the beginning, in which she had had faith, and uttered this repentance, saying thus:

1. O Light of lights, in whom I have had faith from the beginning, hearken now then, O Light, unto my repentance. Save me, O Light, for evil thoughts have entered into me.
2. I gazed, O Light, into the lower parts and saw there a light thinking: I will go to that region, in order that I may take that light. And I went and found myself in the darkness which is in the chaos below, and I could no more speed thence and go to my region, for I was sore pressed by all the emanations of Self-willed, and the lion-faced power took away my light in me.

Chapter 33

Mary again came forward and said: "My Lord, my indweller of light hath ears, and I hear with my light-power, and thy spirit which is with me, hath sobered me. Hearken then that I may speak concerning the repentance which Pistis Sophia hath uttered, speaking of her sin and all that befell her. Thy light-power hath prophesied thereof aforetime through the prophet David in the sixty-eighth Psalm:

1. Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul.
2. I sank, or am submerged, in the slime of the abyss, and power was not. I have gone-down into the depths of the sea; a tempest hath submerged me.

Chapter 52

Jesus continued again and said unto his disciples: "It came to pass then, when Pistis Sophia had proclaimed the ninth repentance, that the lion-faced power oppressed her again, desiring to take away all powers from her. She cried out again to the Light, saying:

'O Light, in whom I have had faith from the beginning, for whose sake I have endured these great pains, help me.'

And in that hour her repentance was accepted from her. The First Mystery hearkened unto her, and I was sent off at his command. I came to help her, and led her up out of the chaos, because she had repented, and also because she had had faith in the Light and had endured these great pains and these great perils. She had been deluded through the god-like Self-willed, and had not been deluded through anything else, save through a light-power, because of its resemblance to the Light in which she had had faith.

Chapter 59

And Jesus continued again in the discourse and said unto his disciples: "It came to pass then, when Pistis Sophia had finished saying these words in the chaos, that I made the light-power, which I had sent to save her, become a light-wreath on her head, so that from now on the emanations of Self-willed could not have dominion over her. And when it had become a light-wreath round her head, all the evil matters in her were shaken and all were purified in her. They perished and remained in the chaos, while the emanations of Self-willed gazed upon them and rejoiced. And the purification of the pure light which was in Pistis Sophia, gave power to the light of my light-power, which had become a wreath round her head.

"It came to pass then moreover, when it surrounded the pure light in Sophia, and her pure light did not depart from the wreath of the power of the light-flame, so that the emanations of Self-willed should not rob it from it,--when then this befell her, the pure light-power in Sophia began to sing praises. And she praised my light-power, which was a wreath round her head, and she sang praises, saying:

- '1. The Light hath become a wreath round my head; and I shall not depart from it, so that the emanations of Self-willed may not rob it from me.
- '2. And though all the matters be shaken, yet shall I not be shaken.
- '3. And though all my matters perish and remain in the chaos,--those which the emanations of Self-willed see,--yet shall I not perish.
- '4. For the Light is with me, and I myself am with the Light.'

Chapter 60

'Grace' then is the light-power which hath come down through the First Mystery; for the First Mystery hath hearkened unto Pistis Sophia and hath had mercy on her in all her tribulations. 'Truth' on the other hand is the power which hath gone forth out of thee, for that thou hast fulfilled the truth, in order to save her out of the chaos. And 'righteousness' again is the power which hath come forth through the First Mystery, which will guide Pistis Sophia. And 'peace' again is the power which hath gone forth out of thee, so that it should enter into the emanations of Self-willed and take from them the lights which they have taken away from Pistis Sophia, that is, so that thou mayest gather them together into Pistis Sophia and make them at peace with her power.