

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

VOL. XXXII (No. 11)

NOVEMBER, 1918

NO. 750

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CHIEF OR MEDICINE-MAN OF IKOLO, LAKE NTOMBA, UPPER CONGO.

Showing full regalia of cowrie shells etc. (Photo by Rev. A. E. Scriviner, Bolobo. By permission of the Baptist Missionary Society.)

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THE PUNISHMENTS IN THE OTHER WORLD.

AS DESCRIBED IN THE APOCALYPSE OF PETER, THE SIBYL-
LINE ORACLES, THE ACTS OF THOMAS, AND
THE APOCALYPSE OF PAUL.

BY BERNHARD PICK.

THE earliest Christian description in detail of paradise and hell is the *Apocalypse of Peter*. In its imagery it has little or no kinship with the Book of Daniel or the Revelation of John. Its only parallels in canonical Scripture, with the notable exception of the Second Epistle of Peter, are to be found in Isaiah lxvi. 24; Mark ix. 44, 48, and in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19ff. But the true parallels for, if not the sources of, its imagery of the rewards and punishments which await men after death, some scholars think were derived from foreign beliefs. Whatever the outside influences, there can be no doubt that our Apocalypse influenced many later Christian visions and descriptions of paradise and hell, and became a direct forerunner of Dante's great poem, the *Divina Comedia*, in the division of the different classes of sinners, in the variety and horror of the punishments appropriate to the crime, and in the picture of paradise. Dante may not have known the Apocalypse, although his inscription on the gate of the Inferno,

Lasciate ogni speranza, voi, ch' entrate,

i. e., "All hope abandon, ye who enter in," could as well be applied to Peter's Inferno; but the framework of his poem comes from other apocalypses which, in turn, were ultimately influenced by Peter's.

Since the greater part of the Petrine Apocalypse treats of the other world and gives us a vivid and elaborate picture of the torments of the wicked, we have selected notable parallels from the Sibylline Oracles, the Acts of Thomas, and the Apocalypse of Paul, which

latter no doubt drew from the Petrine Apocalypse. In all these writings, hell is represented—to use the words of Milton (*Paradise Lost*, I, 61ff.)—as

“A dungeon horrible, on all sides around
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell: hope never comes
That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.”

I. THE APOCALYPSE OF PETER.

Introduction.

In the oldest list of sacred writings, in the so-called *Muratorian Fragment*¹ of the second century, we read: “The apocalypses also of John and Peter only do we receive, which (latter) some among us would not have read in church.” But before this mention Clement of Alexandria in his *Hypotyposes*, according to the testimony of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccles.*, VI, 14), gave “abridged accounts of all the canonical Scriptures, not even omitting those that are disputed—I mean the Book of Jude and the other General Epistles; also the Epistle of Barnabas and that called the Revelation of Peter.” Also in his *Eclogae propheticæ* (Chaps. 41, 48, 49), Clement gives some quotations from the Revelation of Peter, mentioning it twice by name.

Methodius, bishop of Olympos in Lycia, who died as martyr in 311, in his *Symposium*, II, 6, says: “Wherefore we have also learned from divinely inspired Scriptures that untimely births, even if they are the offspring of adultery, are delivered to care-taking angels.” Though Peter is not here mentioned, the purpose of the passage is the same as that of one of the quotations given by Clement.

Eusebius (d. 339 A. D.), in his *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 25, expressly mentions the Revelation of Peter along with the Acts of Paul and the *Shepherd* of Hermas as spurious books, while at III, 3, he says:

¹ So called because first published in the year 1740 by the Italian scholar Muratori. In convenient form it was published by H. Lietzmann (in *Kleine Texte*), Bonn, 1902. Zahn, *Grundriss der Geschichte des neutest. Kanons*, 1901, p. 21, has endeavored to prove that the *Muratorian Fragment* has reference not to the Apocalypse, but to the Epistles of Peter, which Weinel calls “one of the boldest efforts ever attempted by exegetes” (in Hennecke, *Handbuch zu den neutest. Apokryphen*, Tübingen, 1904, p. 285).

“As to that which is called the Preaching and that called the Revelation of Peter, we know nothing of their being handed down as Catholic writings. Since neither among the ancients nor among the ecclesiastical writers of our own day has there been any one that has appealed to testimony taken from them.”

Macarius Magnes, in his *Apocriticus*, IV, 6, quotes about the year 400 as from a heathen opponent of Christianity the following: “Let us by way of superfluity cite also that saying in the Apocalypse of Peter,” etc., and at IV, 16, he examines this passage again, naming the Revelation of Peter, and supporting the doctrine of the passage by the authority of prophecy and the Gospel.

In the *Catalogus Claromontanus*, written in the sixth century, the oldest Græco-Latin manuscript of the Pauline Epistles, the Revelation of Peter stands at the end, after the *Shepherd* of Hermas and the Acts of Paul, whereas in the *Stichometry* of Nicephorus it stands among the “Antilegomena,” or disputed writings, of the New Testament. The lists also give the length of the Revelation, viz., *Catalogus Claromontanus* 270 stichoi, and the *Stichometry* thirty more. According to this the Revelation was about as long as the Epistle to the Galatians (311 stichoi).

Sozomen (middle of the fifth century), in his *Hist. Eccles.*, VII, 19, says: “For instance the so-called Apocalypse of Peter which was esteemed as entirely spurious by the ancients, we have discovered to be read in certain churches of Palestine up to the present day, once a year, on the day of preparation, during which the people most religiously fast in commemoration of the Saviour’s Passion” (i. e., on Good Friday). Sozomen himself belonged to Palestine.

This was all that was known of the Revelation of Peter till the year 1886, when a fragment was discovered in an ancient burying-ground at Akhmim, in Upper Egypt, together with Peter’s Gospel and a part of the Book of Enoch.

The fragment, which was published in 1892, represents probably about one half of the entire work. It begins in the middle of an eschatological discourse of Jesus, probably represented as delivered after the resurrection, for verse 5 implies that the disciples had begun to preach the gospel. It ends abruptly in the course of a catalogue of sinners in hell and their punishments.

Since the fragment follows the Gospel of Peter, Harnack² declared that the fragment belongs to the Apocalypse of Peter which is mentioned so often by ancient writers. In this he was followed

² In *Texte und Untersuchungen* (1893), IX, 2; (1895) XIII, I, 71-73.

by most scholars, and the Akhmim fragment is on this account usually called the Apocalypse of Peter. Not so Albrecht Dieterich,³ who thinks that the Apocalypse is nothing but a portion of the Gospel of Peter. Like the Gospel of Mark (in xiii) and that of Matthew (in xxiv), the Gospel of Peter contained a "little apocalypse" which, according to this authority, we now have almost complete in the fragment.

However this may be, the Apocalypse was probably composed in the first half of the second century; the place of its origin—whether Palestine or Egypt—cannot be determined.

The Apocalypse of Peter "has some points of contact with the Second Epistle of Peter; hence it is supposed that pseudo-Peter had it before him, and that he drew from it the impulse to pose in the person of the prince of the Apostles. Antique heathen ideas of Hades are traceable in its descriptions of the pains of hell, particularly Orphic-Pythagorean traditions. But their presence in the author's mind is probably explained by the use of Judaistic literary sources, and not of heathen works."

Our Apocalypse must not be confounded with the *Apocalypsis Petri per Clementem* (containing explanations alleged to have been given by Peter to Clement of Rome about revelations alleged to have been made by Christ to Peter himself), preserved in Arabic and Ethiopic manuscripts, a miscellaneous collection scarcely older than the eighth century.

In the following we make the text as published by E. Klostermann, *Apocrypha*, I, Bonn, 1908 (forming part of *Kleine Texte*, edited by H. Lietzmann), the basis of our translation. Klostermann's text is based upon the facsimile edition of the Gospel and Apocalypse of Peter by O. von Gebhardt, Leipsic, 1893.

A. *The Fragment of Akhmim.*

I. (1) . . . Many of them will be false prophets, and will teach divers ways and doctrines of perdition. (2) But these will become sons of perdition. (3) Then God will come unto my faithful ones who hunger and thirst and are afflicted and test their souls in this life, and the children of lawlessness he will judge.

II. (4) And the Lord continued saying, Let us go into the mountains: let us pray. (5) And when we, the twelve disciples went with him, we asked him to show us one of our brethren, the

³ See *Nekyia, Beiträge zur Erläuterung der neuentdeckten Petrusapokalypse*, Leipsic, 1893; comp. also Krüger, *Altchristliche Literatur*, Freiburg, 1898, p. 33f; Waitz, art. "Apokryphen des Neuen Testaments" in Herzog-Hauck, *R. E.*, XXIII, 102 (1913).

righteous who are gone forth out of the world, that we might see of what manner of form they are, and, having taken courage, might also encourage the men who hear us.

III. (6) And as we were praying, suddenly there appeared two men, standing before the Lord, on whom we were not able to look. (7) For there came forth from their countenance a ray as of the sun, and their raiment was shining, such as eye of man never saw; and no mouth is able to utter, or heart to conceive, the glory which surrounded them, and the beauty of their countenance. (8) When we saw them we became amazed; for their bodies were whiter than any snow and ruddier than any rose. (9) And the white on them was mingled with the red. I am utterly unable to describe their beauty. (10) Their hair was curly and bright and seemly both on their face and shoulders like one crown woven of spikenard and diversicolored flowers or like the rainbow in the sky. Such was their seemliness.

IV. (11) When we beheld their beauty we became astonished at them, for they had appeared suddenly. (12) And approaching the Lord I said, Who are these? (13) He said to me, These are your⁴ righteous brethren, whose form ye desired to see. (14) And I said to him, And where are all the righteous ones? or how doth the world look in which those live, who have such a glory?

V. (15) And the Lord showed me a very great space outside of this world, exceeding bright with light, and the air there lighted with the rays of the sun, and the earth itself blooming with unfading flowers and full of spices and plants, fair-flowering and incorruptible and bearing blessed fruit. (16) And so great was the perfume that it was borne thence even unto us. (17) And the inhabitants of that place were clad in the shining raiment of angels; and their raiment was as beautiful as their country. (18) And angels mingled there with them. (19) All the inhabitants had the like glory, and praised the Lord with one voice, rejoicing in that place. (20) The Lord saith to us, This is the place of your brethren,⁵ the righteous men.

VI. (21) But I also saw another place over against this, very squalid; and it was the place of punishment; and those that were

⁴ The codex reads "our" which might be original with reference to Rom. viii. 28, where Jesus is called a brother. But it is probably more correct to read "your" with reference to verse 20.

⁵ So some authorities. Another authority suggests: high priests; a third: predecessors, leaders.

punished there, and the punishing angels⁶ had their [raiment] dark, like the air of the place.

VII. (22) And some were hanging by the tongue. These were those who blasphemed the way of righteousness, and under them lay fire burning and tormenting them.⁷

VIII. (23) And there was a great lake, full of flaming mire, in which were certain men that perverted righteousness, and tormenting angels afflicted them.

IX. (24) But there were also others, women, hanged by their hair over that mire that bubbled up; and these were they who adorned themselves for adultery. The men, however, who mingled with them in the defilement of adultery were hanging by the feet, and their heads in that mire, and they said with a loud voice, We did not believe that we should come into this place.

X. (25) And I saw the murderers and those who conspired with them, cast into a strait place, full of evil snakes, and smitten by those beasts, and turning to and fro in that punishment; and like clouds of darkness did worms afflict them. And the souls of the murdered stood and looked upon the punishment of the murderers and said, O God, thy judgment is just.

XI. (26) And near that place I saw another strait place into [which] the blood and the filth of those who were being punished ran down and became there as it were a lake. There sat women having the blood up to their necks, and over against them sat many children born to them out of due time and cried; and there came forth from them sparks of fire and smote the women in the eyes. These were those who not being married conceived and caused abortion.

XII. (27) And other men and women were burning up to the middle and were cast into a dark place and were beaten by evil spirits, and their inwards were eaten by restless worms. These were they who persecuted the righteous and delivered them up.

XIII. (28) And near those there were again women and men gnawing their own lips, and being punished and receiving a red-hot iron in their eyes. These were they who blasphemed and slandered the way of righteousness.

XIV. (29) And over against these again other men and women

⁶ Of punishing angels we also read in *Hermas*, *Pastor*, *Simil.* VI, 3; *Book of Enoch* lxxiii. 12; lxxiv. 29; lxxxiii. 4; lxxxv. 17.

⁷ Descriptions of the torments as given in the *Apocalypse of Peter*, we also find in other works, e. g., *Acts of Thomas*, *Sibylline Oracles*, *Vision of Paul*, which are given further on.

gnawing their tongues and having flaming fire in their mouths. These were the false witnesses.

XV. (30) And in another place there were pebbles sharper than swords and any spit, red-hot, and women and men in tattered and filthy raiment rolled about on them in punishment. These were they who were rich and trusted in their riches and had no pity for orphans and widows, but despised the commandment of God.

XVI. (31) And in another great lake, full of pitch and blood and mire bubbling up, there stood men and women up to their knees. These were the usurers and those who took interest on interest.

XVII. (32) Other men and women were being hurled down from a great cliff, and, having reached the bottom, they were again driven by the tormenters to climb upon the cliff, to be hurled down again. And they had no rest from this punishment. These were they who had defiled their bodies having acted as women; and the women who were with them were those who lay with one another as a man with a woman.

XVIII. (33) And beside that cliff there was a place full of much fire. There stood men who with their own hands made for themselves images instead of God. And alongside of these were other men and women having rods of fire and striking each other, and never ceasing from such punishment. These were they who. . . .

XIX. (34) And others again near them, women and men, burning and turning themselves and roasting. And these were they that leaving the way of God. . . .

B. *Fragments Known from Quotations.*

1. The Scripture says that infants that have been exposed are delivered to a care-taking angel by whom they are educated and so grow up, and they will be, it says, as the faithful of a hundred years old are here. Wherefore Peter also says in the Revelation: "and a flash of fire, which came out from those newly born children, and struck the eyes of the women."—Clem. Alex., *Eclog. proph.*, 41.

2. For instance, Peter in the Apocalypse says: "The children that are born out of due time shall be of the better part; they are delivered over to a care-taking angel that they may attain a share of knowledge and gain the better abode after suffering what they would have suffered if they had been in the body; but the others shall merely obtain salvation as injured beings to whom mercy is shown, and remain without punishment, receiving this as reward.—But the milk of the women running down from their breasts and congealing," as Peter says in the Revelation, "shall engender small

flesh-eating beasts, and these run up upon them and devour them, teaching that the punishments are for their sins.”—Clem. Alex., *Eclog. proph.*, 48. 49.

3. Whence also we have received in divinely inspired writings that “untimely births, though they be a fruit of adultery, are delivered to care-taking angels.” For if they originated against the intention and order of that blessed nature of God, “how could they be delivered to angels to be brought up in great quietness and ease? How could they also, in order to accuse their own parents, freely call them to account before the judgment-seat of Christ and say, Thou, O Lord, hast not denied to us this light common [to all]; but they have exposed us to die, despising thine own command?”—Methodius, *Sympos.*, II, 6.

4. Over and above let this also yet be added, what is read in the Apocalypse of Peter. He introduces the judgment over heaven and earth with the following words: “The earth shall present all men before God at the day of judgment being itself also to be judged, with the heaven also which encompasses it.”—The heathen author (Porphyry?) by Macarius Magnes, *Apocriticus*, IV, 6, 16.

5. And again he says, which is entirely wicked, when he speaks: “And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all the stars shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine and as the leaves fall from the fig-tree.”^s—*Ibid.*, IV, 7.

II. THE SIBYLLINE ORACLES.

II, 238ff.

This section treats of the great day of judgment, on which the righteous shall be saved, whereas the wicked shall pass through the flaming fire and the unquenchable flame and be undone to all ages. The wicked are those who,

... committed murder, or were accomplices,
Liars and thieves, cheats, grievous ruiners of homes,
Parasites, marriage-breakers, heaping up shamelessness,
Fiendish, overbearing, lawless, idolaters
260 And those who have deserted the great immortal God
And became blasphemers and persecutors of the pious,
Destroyers of believers and enemies of the righteous;
And all those deceitful and shamelessly two-faced
Presbyters and eminent deacons who regard...

^s See Isaiah xxxiv. 4 (lxx); comp. also 2 Pet. iii. 10f; Rev. vi. 13f.

- 265 Being afraid, beat others unjustly
 Trusting to, and misled by rumors. . . .
 More destructive than panthers and wolves. . . .
 And as many of them as were proud and usurers,
 Who heap usury on usury at home
- 270 And destroy the orphans and widows;
 And all such who to widows and orphans
 Give of unrighteous deeds, and when of their substance
 They give, accompany it with reproaches; and those who old
 parents
 Deserted, not reverencing them, expenses caused to parents
- 275 Not repaying; also the disobedient,
 And such as use violent language to their parents;
 Who having received a pledge deny it.
 Servants, too, that have wronged their masters;
 And again, those, who polluted themselves by debauchery.
- 280 Or such as have loosed a virgin's girdle
 For secret intercourse. Women, who, having burdens in the
 womb,
 Procure abortion, and such who wickedly throw away their
 offspring.
 Sorcerers and sorceresses, all these
 The anger of the heavenly and incorruptible God
- 285 Shall bring to the pillar where, all around,
 Flows an inexhaustible river of fire. All alike
 The angels of the immortal and eternal God
 With flaming scourges and fiery chains,
 Binding them down with unbreakable bonds,
- 290 Shall punish terribly; then in the midnight gloom
 Will they be cast to Gehenna's Tartarean beasts,
 To the many and fearful, where darkness is supreme.
 But, when they shall have inflicted many punishments
 On all who had an evil heart, thereafter
- 295 A fiery whirlpool from the great river shall carry them around,
 Because they busied themselves with wicked works.
 Then from the distance shall their lamentation arise on every
 hand,
 Over their miserable fate; both from fathers and children,
 From mothers and their infant sucklings.
- 300 There shall be no sufficiency to their tears, nor shall
 the compassionate voice of sympathizers be anywhere heard;
 But they shall howl, kept in the black darkness

Below Tartarus. In these accursed localities
 They shall pay threefold the evil they have perpetrated.
 305 Racked by the sea of fire they shall gnash with their teeth,
 Consumed by thirst and by their flaming torment.
 They shall call it a blessing to die, but shall not be able.
 Neither death nor night shall any longer bring them rest.
 They shall vainly pour out supplications to God on high
 310 Who will turn his face unmistakably from them;
 For he gave seven ages as time of repentance
 To erring men by a pure virgin's hand.—

For the benefit of the reader we add here a few words on the Sybilline Books, which belong to the most remarkable literary productions that we have.

In the ancient world the Sybil was regarded as an inspired prophetess. She belonged to no prophetic order or priestly cast, but held a position free and uncontrolled as a súperhumanly gifted organ of the will and counsels of the gods. The number of such sibyls is variously stated at different times. According to Marcus Varro, as quoted by Lactantius (*Divine Institutes*, I, Chap. 6), there were ten Sibyls, who are mentioned by name.

Written accounts of the oracles delivered by the Sibyls obtained in Greece and Asia Minor only a private circulation. Still, though they were not preserved by the State or publicly consulted, we must not underrate their importance in the life and thought of the Eastern classical world. In Rome, however, they acquired quite a unique position. It is not necessary to treat here of the very ancient collection of these oracles, said to have been purchased by King Tarquinius Priscus, or to record the frequent occasions on which they were consulted with a superstitious reverence by the State before their destruction in the fire that consumed the capitol in the time of Sylla (84 B. C.). Their place was soon afterward taken (75 B. C.) by a collection amounting in all to about one thousand verses, made in Greece, Asia Minor, Africa, and Italy, by order of the Senate.

The Greek books of Sybilline Oracles which have come down to us belong to that large body of pseudepigraphical literature which originated near the beginning of the Christian era (about 150 B. C. to 300 A. D.), consisting of such works as the Book of Enoch, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Book of Jubilees, the Assumption of Moses, the Psalms of Solomon, the Ascension of Isaiah, and the Second Book of Esdras. The production of this class of literature was most notable at Alexandria in the time of the

Ptolemies. As soon as Judaism began to look with a spirit of philosophic inquiry into Greek and Oriental literature, it attached itself to such elements as seemed congenial. A composite product was the result. The Alexandrian Jews were the first to adopt this course by fusing the remnants of Greek sibyllism with their native prophecy. In this way, no doubt, arose the Jewish Sibyl, assuming to be a daughter of Noah, and skilled in all prophetic knowledge. "And this passion for reproducing famous oracles spread beyond the land of Egypt, and gathered breadth and volume with its years of growth. Not only were the historical and philosophical productions of the Greeks made use of, but the speculations of the Persians, the mysteries of Egyptian priests, and the poetical myths and legends of all nations contributed to the medley which Hellenistic Jews were fond of turning to a pious purpose. And just as the allegorical method of interpreting Scripture was handed over as a sort of inheritance to the early Christian Church, so the passion for producing pseudonymous books took easy possession of many Christian writers of the first centuries. Hence the large number of apocryphal Gospels and Acts and Apocalypses."

Our Sibylline Books represent a heterogeneous assemblage of materials, Jewish, Christian, and heathen, of earlier and later origin, "a chaotic wilderness, to sift and arrange which even baffles the most acute criticism. For, unfortunately, it is not the case that each book forms of itself an original whole, but that even the single books are some of them arbitrary aggregates of fragments. The curse of pseudonymous authorship seems to have prevailed specially over these oracles. Every reader and writer allowed himself to complete what existed after his own pleasure, and to arrange the scattered papers now in one, now in an opposite manner. Evidently much was at first circulated in detached portions, and the collection of these afterward made by some admirer was a very accidental one. Hence duplicates of many portions are found in different places. And the manuscripts which have come down to us exhibit great discrepancies in the arrangement."⁹

It is remarkable how many of the early Christian Fathers quote these spurious oracles,¹⁰ so that Celsus, according to Origen (*Contra Celsum*, V, 61), terms the Christians *Sibyllistai*, i. e., believers in sibyls, or sibyl-mongers. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria,

⁹ Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, Vol. III, p. 276. English translation, Edinburgh, 1886.

¹⁰ See my article "The Sibylline Oracles in the Writings of the Church Fathers" in *Lutheran Quarterly Review*, Gettysburg, July, 1885.

Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Eusebius,¹¹ Augustine,¹² Jerome, but more especially Lactantius, all quote the oracles for apologetic purposes, and it is to these and other Christian writers that we are indebted for the preservation of the entire collection that has come down to us.

As to the relation of the Jewish and Christian Sibyllines to the ancient heathen ones, it is practically impossible to determine it. They assumed, of course, the outward form of the older oracles, being written in Homeric verse; but they transgress every rule of prosody. As regards the matter, it is more than probable that the later Sibyls used much of the older material lying ready to hand; but in the present state the Christian element preponderates.

The first printed edition of the Oracles was published at Basel in 1545; a better edition was that of Opsopœus (i. e., Koch), Paris, 1599; Gallæus, Amsterdam, 1689; a good edition was published by Alexandre, Paris, 1841-56, 2 vols.; 2d ed. in one vol., 1869; by Friedlieb, Leipsic, 1852, with a German translation. In 1891 an edition was published by Rzach at Vienna; the latest is that of Geffcken, Leipsic, 1902, published for the series of the Greek Christian writers of the first three centuries, edited by the Church Fathers' Commission of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, still in course of publication.

We referred above to the fact that Eusebius and Augustine also mentioned, or rather quoted, the Sibylline Oracles. Their quotation is the more remarkable because it contains an acrostic, which is the most extraordinary of all the Sibylline fabrications. It is found in the second section of the eighth book of the Oracles (VIII, 217-244/250), and the first letters of these lines form the words,

ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΕΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ,

i. e., "Jesus Christ God's Son, Saviour, Cross." It is quoted in full by Eusebius in Constantine's "Oration to the Assembly of the Saints," Chap. XVIII, and, excepting the seven last lines, by Augustine in his *City of God*, Book XVIII, 23. The same Father also states, that when they were speaking about Christ, Flaccianus, a very famous man, of most ready eloquence and much learning, produced a Greek manuscript, saying that it was the prophecies of the Erythrean Sibyl, in which he pointed out a certain passage that has the initial letters so arranged that those words Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ υἱός σωτήρ (i. e., Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour) could be read. Then he goes on and gives these verses, of which the

¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹ See at the end of this section.

initials yield that meaning, and says: "But if you join the initial letters of those five Greek words, they will make the word *ἰχθῦς*, that is, 'fish,' in which word Christ is mystically understood, because he was able to live, that is, to exist, without sin in the abyss of this mortality, as in the depth of waters" (August., *De civitate Dei*, XVIII, 23).

In the English translation of Augustine's work as given by Dodd (Edinburgh, 1871) the Greek letters are retained at the beginning of the lines; in the translation of Eusebius (*The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine*, London, Bagster & Sons, 1845) the English equivalent is retained at the beginning of the lines. We here give both forms.

[From Augustine's *City of God*.]

- I Judgment shall moisten the earth with the sweat of its standard,
 H Ever enduring, behold the King shall come through the ages,
 Σ Sent to be here in the flesh, and judge at the last of the world.
 O O God, the believing and faithless alike shall behold thee
 Υ Uplifted with saints, when at last the ages are ended,
 Σ Sisted before him are souls in the flesh for his judgment.
- X Hid in thick vapors, the while desolate lieth the earth,
 P Rejected by men are the idols and long-hidden treasures;
 E Earth is consumed by the fire, and it searcheth the ocean and heaven;
- I Issuing forth it destroyeth the terrible portals of hell.
 Σ Saints in their body and soul freedom and light shall inherit;
 T Those who are guilty shall burn in fire and brimstone for ever.
 O Occult actions revealing, each one shall publish his secrets;
 Σ Secrets of every man's heart God shall reveal in the light.
- Θ Then shall be weeping and wailing, yea, and gnashing of teeth;
 E Eclipsed is the sun, and silenced the stars in their chorus.
 O Over and gone is the splendor of moonlight, melted the heaven.
 Υ Uplifted by him are the valleys, and cast down the mountains.
- Υ Utterly gone among men are distinctions of lofty and lowly.
 I Into the plains rush the hills, the skies and oceans are mingled.
 O O, what an end of all things! earth broken in pieces shall perish;
 Σ Swelling together at once shall the waters and flames flow in rivers.

- Σ Sounding, the archangel's trumpet shall peal down from heaven
 Ω Over the wicked who groan in their guilt and their manifold
 sorrows.
 T Trembling, the earth shall be opened, revealing chaos and hell.
 H Every king before God shall stand in that day to be judged.
 P Rivers of fire and brimstone shall fall from the heavens.

[From Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*.]

Judgment! Earth's oozing pores shall mark the day
 Earth's heavenly King his glories shall display;
 Sovereign of all, exalted on his throne,
 Unnumbered multitudes their God shall own;
 Shall see their Judge, with mingled joy and fear.

Crowned with his saints, in human form appear,
 How vain, while desolate earth's glories lie,
 Riches and pomp, and man's idolatry!
 In that dread hour, when nature's fiery door
 Startles the slumbering tenants of the tomb,
 Trembling all flesh shall stand; each secret wile.

Sins long forgotten, thoughts of guilt and guile,
 Open beneath God's searching light shall lie:
 No refuge then, but hopeless agony.

O'er heaven's expanse shall gathering shades of night
 From earth, sun, stars, and moon withdraw their light;

God's arm shall crush each mountain's towering pride;
 On ocean's plain no more shall navies ride.
 Dried at the source, no river's rushing sound

Shall soothe, no fountain slake the parched ground.
 Around, afar, shall roll the trumpet's blast,
 Voice of wrath long delayed, revealed at last.
 In speechless awe, while earth's foundations groan,
 On judgment's seat earth's kings their God shall own.
 Uplifted then, in majesty divine,
 Radiant with light, behold Salvation's sign!

Cross of that Lord who, once for sinners given,
 Reviled by man, now owned by earth and heaven,
 O'er every land extends his iron sway.
 Such is the name these mystic lines display;
 Saviour, eternal King, who bears our sins away.

III. THE ACTS OF THOMAS.¹³

Chaps. 55-57.

55. And the apostle said to her, "Tell us where thou hast been." And she answered, "Dost thou, who wast with me, to whom also I was intrusted, wish to hear?" And she commenced thus: "An ugly-looking man, all black, received me; and his dress was exceeding filthy. And he took me to a place where there were many chasms, and a great stench and most hateful odor were given forth thence. And he made me look into each chasm, and I saw in the chasm blazing fire, and fiery wheels run there, and souls were hung upon those wheels, dashing against each other. And there was crying and great lamentation, and no Saviour was there. And that man said to me, These souls are akin to thee, and in the days of numbering they were given over to punishment and destruction. And then [when the torture of each is completed] others are brought in in their places; in like manner also these are again succeeded by others. These are they who have exchanged the intercourse of man and wife. And again I looked down, and saw infants [newly born] heaped upon each other, and struggling and lying upon each other. And he said to me, These are their children and for this they are placed here for a testimony against them.

56. "And he brought me to another chasm, and as I looked into it, I saw mud, and worms spouting forth, and souls wallowing there; and [I heard] a great gnashing of teeth thence from them. And that man said to me, These are the souls of women which left their husbands [and of husbands which left their wives], and committed adultery with others, and which have been brought to this torment. And he showed me another chasm, and looking into it, I saw souls hung up, some by the tongue, some by the hair, some by the hands, others by the feet, head downward, and smoked with smoke and sulphur. Concerning these the man which accompanied me said the following: The souls hung up by the tongue are slanderers, and such as have spoken false and disgraceful words and are not ashamed of it. Those hung up by the hair are the shameless, who are not ashamed at all and go about with uncovered heads in the world. Those hung up by the hands are they which took that which did not belong to them and have stolen and who never gave anything to the poor voluntarily, nor did they help the afflicted; but

¹³ Particulars on the Acts of Thomas are given in *Apocryphal Acts of Paul, Peter, John, Andrew and Thomas*, by B. Pick, Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1909, pp. 222ff.

they so acted because they wished to get everything, and cared neither for law and right. And these hung up by the feet are those who lightly and eagerly walked in wicked ways and disorderly paths, not visiting the sick, neither burying those who departed this life. On this account each soul receiveth what it hath done.

57. "And again he led me forth and showed me a very dark cavern, exhaling a very bad odor. Many souls were peeping out thence, wishing to get some share of the air. And their keepers would not let them peep out. And my companion said to me, This is the prison of these souls, which thou hast seen. For when they have fully received their punishment for that which each hath done, others succeed them. Some are fully eaten up, others are given up to other punishments. And the keepers of the souls in the dark cavern said to the man that had charge of me, Give her to us, that we bring her to the others till the time cometh when she is given to punishment. But he said to them, I will not give her to you, because I am afraid of him who gave her up to me. For I was not told to leave her here; I shall take her up with me, till I get an injunction about her. And he took me and brought me to another place, where there were men who were bitterly tortured. He that is like thee took me and gave me up to thee, saying to thee, Take her, for she is one of the sheep which have wandered away," etc., etc.

IV. THE APOCALYPSE OF PAUL.

Introduction.

The Apocalypse of Paul is extant in three main versions, the Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The Greek was published by Tischendorf in *Apocalypses apocryphae*, Leipsic, 1866, pp. 34-69 (cf. Preface, pp. xiv-xviii), and was also translated into English by A. Walker. It is found in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VIII. The ancient Latin version was edited from an eighth-century manuscript by James in *Apocrypha anecdota*, Cambridge, 1893, pp. 1-42, and is given in English by A. Rutherford in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. IX. An English translation of a Syriac version was published by J. Perkins in the *Journal of Sacred Literature*, N. S., 1865, Vol. VI. Of these the Latin seems to be the fullest. In this Apocalypse we are introduced to mysteries that Paul beheld when he ascended to the third heaven, "and was caught up into paradise and heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter" (2 Cor. xii. 2ff.). In the company of an angel, Paul leaves this world, beholds on his way the departure of the souls of the just and the sinful,

and arrives at the place of the just souls, in the shining land of promise, on the shore of the Acherusian Lake, out of which the City of God arises. Thence he is led to the place of the wicked and beholds the manifold sufferings of the damned. Finally he is allowed to visit paradise, where Adam and Eve had committed the first sin.

The work itself suggests that it was composed in or about the time of Theodosius (379-395), and in or near Jerusalem. Traces of it first appear in the Homilies of Augustine on the Gospel of John (*Tractat. in Ioannem*, XCVIII, 8), delivered about 416, and in the *Church History* of Sozomen (VII, 19) written about 440. Augustine judges with severity the deception practised by the writer, but Sozomen is witness that in other circles, especially among the monks, the work met with approval. During the Middle Ages the work seems to have enjoyed great popularity as may be seen from H. Brandes, *Visio S. Pauli*, Halle, 1895, in which he gives two shorter Latin versions, enumerates twenty-two different manuscripts of the Latin and "gives particulars of French, English, Danish, and Slavonic forms of the legend."

Different from our work is the *Ascension of Paul*, a second- or third-century work mentioned only by Epiphanius (*Haeres.*, XXXVIII, 2), a work replete with abominable things, and used exclusively by Cainites and Gnostics.

Translation.

31.¹⁴ And he¹⁵ said to me, Come and follow me, and I will show thee the souls of the impious and sinners. And he took me to the setting of the sun, and I saw the beginning of heaven founded on a great river of water, the Ocean which surroundeth all the earth. And when I was at the outer limit of Ocean I looked, and there was no light in that place, but darkness and sorrow and sadness, and I sighed.¹⁶

And I saw there a fervent river of fire, and in it a multitude

¹⁴ The numbers refer to the sections in the Latin version which is fuller than the Greek.

¹⁵ I. e., the angel. Dante in the *Inferno* is accompanied by the poet Virgil.

¹⁶ Dante describes (*Inferno*, III, 22-30) the situation thus:

"There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.
Languages diverse, horrible dialects,
Accents of anger, words of agony,
And voices high and hoarse, with sounds of hands
Made up a tumult that goes whirling on
Forever in that air, forever black,
Even as the sand doth, when the whirlwind breathes."

of men and women immersed up to the knees, and other men up to the navel, [others even up to the lips,]¹⁷ others moreover up to the hair. And I asked, Who are these? And he said to me, [They are neither hot nor cold, because they were found neither in the number of the just nor in the number of the impious.¹⁸ For these spent the time of their life on earth passing some days in prayer, but others in sins and fornications, until their death.

And who are these immersed up to their knees in fire? These are they who when they have gone out of church throw themselves into strange conversations to dispute. Those indeed who are immersed up to the navel are those who, when they have taken the body and blood of Christ go and fornicate and did not cease from their sins till they died. Those who are immersed up to the lips are the detractors of each other when they assemble in the church of God; those up to the eyebrows are those who nod approval of themselves and plot spite against their neighbor.

32. And I saw on the north a place of various and diverse punishments full of men and women,¹⁹ and a river of fire ran down into it. Moreover I observed and saw pits great in depth, and in them several souls together, and the depth of that place was as it were three thousand cubits, and I saw them groaning and weeping.] And I asked the angel and said, Who are these? And he said, These are they who did not hope in the Lord, that they would be able to have him as their helper. And I said to him, What is the depth of this river? And he said to me, Its depth has no measure, but it is immeasurable.

34. I further observed the fiery river and saw there a man being tortured by Tartaruchian angels having in their hands an iron with three hooks with which they pierced the bowels of that old man: and I asked the angel and said, Who is this that suffereth this punishment? And he said to me, This old man whom thou seest was a presbyter; and when he had eaten and drunk, then he performed the service of God.

35. And I saw there another old man led on by malign angels²⁰ running with speed, and they threw him into the fiery river up to his knees, and they struck him with stones and wounded his face like a storm. And I asked, Who is this? And he saith, This man

¹⁷ Sentences in [] are not found in the Greek.

¹⁸ It is interesting to note that in the *Inferno* Dante also meets first such indifferentists who lived "without fame or infamy."

¹⁹ The Greek has here: thieves and slanderers and flatterers.

²⁰ In the Greek: four angels.

was a bishop, and that name indeed he was well pleased to have; but in the goodness of God he did not walk, righteous judgment he did not judge, the widow and the orphan he did not pity [he was neither affectionate nor hospitable];²¹ but now he hath been recompensed according to his works.

36. And I saw another man in the fiery river up to his knees. Moreover his hands were stretched out and bloody, and worms proceeded from his mouth and nostrils. And I asked, Who is this? And he said to me, This whom thou seest was a deacon who devoured the oblations [and committed fornication, and did not right in the sight of God, for this cause he unceasingly payeth this penalty.

And I looked closely and saw alongside of him another man whom they delivered up with haste and cast into the fiery river, and he was in it up to the knees. And there came the angel who was set over the punishments having a great fiery razor, and with it he cut the lips of that man and the tongue likewise. I asked, Who is that? And he answered, He was a reader and read to the people, but he himself did not keep the precepts of God.

37. And I saw another multitude of pits in the same place, and in the midst of it a river full of a multitude of men and women, and worms consumed them. Who are those? These are those who exacted interest on interest and trusted in their riches and did not hope in God that He was their helper.]

And I looked to another place where there was a brazen wall in flames, and within it men and women eating up their own tongues, dreadfully judged. And I asked, Who are these? These are they who in the church [speak against their neighbors],²² and do not attend to the word of God, [but as it were make naught of God and His angels.

38. And I saw another old man down in a pit and his countenance was like blood. And I asked, What is this place? And he said, Into that pit stream all the punishments. And I saw men and women immersed up to their lips and I asked, Who are these? And he said, These are magicians who prepared for men and women evil magic arts and did not find how to stop them till they died.

And again I saw men and women with very black faces in a pit of fire. I asked, Who are these? These are fornicators and adulterers who committed adultery having wives of their own; likewise also the women committed adultery having husbands of their own; therefore they unceasingly suffer penalties.

²¹ These words in [] not in the Latin.

²² So in the Greek.

39. And I saw girls having black raiment, and four terrible angels having in their hands burning chains, and they put them on the necks of the girls] and led them into darkness. Who are these? These are they who did not listen to their parents, but before their marriage defiled their virginity.

[And again I observed there men and women with hands cut and their feet placed naked in a place of ice and snow, and worms devoured them. And I asked, Who are these? They are those who harmed orphans and widows and the poor, and did not hope in the Lord. And I observed and saw others hanging over a channel of water and their tongues were very dry, and many fruits were placed in their sight, and they were not permitted to take of them, and I asked, Who are these? These are they who break their fast before the appointed time.

And I saw other men and women hanging by their eyebrows and their hair, and a fiery river drew them, and I said, Who are these? These are they who join themselves not to their own husbands and wives but to whores.

And I saw other men and women covered with dust and their countenance was like blood, and they were in a pit of pitch and sulphur and running down into a fiery river. Who are these? These are they who committed the iniquity of Sodom and Gomorrah, the male with the male.

40. And I saw men and women clothed in bright garments, having their eyes blind, placed in a pit. Who are these? These are of the people who did alms, and knew not the Lord God. And I saw other men and women on an obelisk of fire, and beasts tearing them in pieces. And I saw the angel of penalties putting heavy punishments on them and saying, Acknowledge the Son of God; for this was predicted to you, when the divine Scriptures were read to you, and you did not attend. Who are these men and women? These are women who defiled the image of God when bringing forth infants out of the womb, and these are the men who lay with them. And their infants addressed the Lord God and the angels who were set over the punishments saying, Cursed be the hour of our parents, for they defiled the image of God, having the name of God but not observing His precepts; they gave us for food to dogs and to be trodden down of swine; others they threw into the river. But their infants were handed over to the angels of Tartarus who were set over the punishments, that they might lead them to a wide place of mercy, but their fathers and mothers were tortured in a perpetual punishment.

And after that I saw men and women clothed with rags full of pitch and fiery sulphur, and dragons were coiled about their necks and shoulders and feet, and angels having fiery horns restrained them and smote them, and closed their nostrils, saying to them, Why did ye not know the time in which it was right to repent and serve God, and did not do it? And I asked, Who are these? These are they who seem to give up the world for God, putting on our garb, but the impediments of the world made them wretched, not maintaining *agapae*, and they did not pity widows and orphans; they did not receive the stranger and the pilgrim, nor did they offer the oblations, and they did pity widows and orphans; they did not receive the stranger and the pilgrim, nor did they offer the oblations, and they did pity their neighbor. Moreover their prayer did not even on one day ascend pure to the Lord God, but many impediments of the world detained them, and they were not able to do right in the sight of God, and the angels enclosed them in the place of punishments. Moreover they saw those who were in punishments and said to them, We indeed when we lived in the world neglected God, and ye also did likewise: as we also truly when we were in the world knew that ye were sinners. But ye said, These are just and servants of God, now we know why ye were called by the name of the Lord; for which cause they also pay their own penalties.

And sighing I wept and said, Woe unto me, woe unto sinners! Why were they born? And the angel answered and said unto me, Why dost thou lament? Art thou more pitiful than the Lord God who is blessed forever, who established judgment and sent forth every man to choose good and evil in his own will and do what pleaseth him? Then I lamented again very greatly, and he said to me, Dost thou lament when as yet thou hast not seen greater punishment? Follow me and thou shalt see seven times greater than these.]

41. And the angel took me up from these torments, and set me above a well, which had seven seals upon its mouth. And the angel who was with me said to the angel at the well of that place, Open the well, that Paul the beloved of God may see, because there has been given to him authority to see the torments. And the angel of the place said to me, Stand afar off, until I open the seals. And when he had opened them, there came forth a stench which it was impossible to bear. And having come near the place, I saw that well filled with darkness and gloom, and great narrowness of space in it [so as to admit one man only].²³ And the angel who was with me said to me, This place of the well which thou seest is cast off from

²³ So in the Latin.

the glory of God, and none of the angels is importunate in behalf of them;²⁴ and as many as have professed that the holy Mary is not the mother of God, and that the Lord did not become man out of her,²⁵ and that the bread of thanksgiving and the cup of blessing are not His flesh and blood,²⁶ are cast into this well.

42. And I saw toward the setting of the sun [and I saw there a restless worm and in that place there was gnashing of teeth. Moreover the worms were one cubit long, and had two heads, and there I saw men and women in cold and gnashing of teeth.]²⁷ And I said: who are these? These are they who say [that Christ did not rise from the dead and]²⁸ that there is no resurrection of the dead; and to them mercy never cometh.²⁹

²⁴ In the Latin: If any man shall have been put into this well of the abyss and it shall have been sealed over him, no remembrance of him shall ever be made in the sight of the Father and His Son and the holy angels.

²⁵ In the Latin: Who are those who are put into the well? They are whoever shall not confess that Christ has come in the flesh and that the Virgin Mary brought Him forth.

²⁶ The Latin reads: that the bread and cup of the Eucharist of blessing are not this body and blood of Christ.—In the Syriac the whole sentence reads thus: Those who do not confess Jesus Christ, nor His resurrection, nor His humanity, but consider Him as all mortal, and who say that the sacrament of the body of our Lord is bread.

²⁷ So in the Latin.

²⁸ So in the Latin.

²⁹ In the Latin we read: And I asked and said, Is there no fire nor heat in this place? And he said, In this place there is nothing else but cold and snow; and even if the sun should rise upon them, they do not become warm on account of the superabundant cold of that place and snow.

It is interesting that in Dante's *Inferno* the ninth and last circle is the abode of traitors, farthest removed from the source of all light and heat, the frozen lake of Cocytus. According to Dante hell or the *Inferno* has nine circles. The *first* circle is the moderate hell for the least guilty class of sinners who were ignorant of Christianity and deprived of the benefit of baptism. With the *second* circle hell proper commences. It contains the souls of carnal sinners who are driven by fierce winds in total darkness. In the *third* circle are the epicures and gluttons, whose god is their belly. In the *fourth* are the prodigal and avaricious; in the *fifth* the filthy spirits of brutal arrogance and wrath. In the *sixth* heretics and infidels are punished. The *seventh* is the abode of murderers, suicides, and blasphemers. In the *eighth* are seducers, flatterers, Simoniacs, soothsayers, barrators, hypocrites, thieves, evil counselors, schismatics, falsifiers; in the *ninth* traitors.