

Le Dialogue du Sauveur (NH III,5)

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“When you abandon the works which will not be able to follow you, then you will find rest.” Thus teaches the Saviour in the *Dialogue of the Saviour* (141,9-12), in a passage that sums up the central doctrine of this “revelation dialogue” between Jesus—the Revealer who has come down from the Pleroma—and his disciples Mary, Matthew, and Judas.

An explicitly Christian document, but one unknown before its discovery in Upper Egypt in 1945, the *Dialogue of the Saviour* presents Jesus' final teaching to his disciples before his departure from this world. If the elect reader knows him or herself and can find his or her luminous root, becoming free of anger, envy, and all the other passions called into being by shadow and darkness, then he or she will be able to “see” the place of rest. However, in order to attain the great, eternal vision of the living God, one must wait until after death, when the soul can abandon the body and escape from the archons, eons, and celestial powers that seek to keep it captive in this world of poverty. Only then will the soul be able to enter the nuptial chamber as a bride and be eternally united with its celestial groom.

One looks in vain in the *Dialogue of the Saviour* for radical antic cosmic tendencies, that is, for any portrayal of the material world as the creation of an evil or ignorant Demiurge or as the source of all the ills that oppress humanity. And while traces of the myth of the descent from the Pleroma of a pneumatic seed can be detected, it is certainly not clearly and explicitly presented in the text. But despite the absence or apparent absence of these teachings, the work remains essentially gnostic in nature, a product of the Valentinian tradition—although its doctrines have been modified in the attempt to create a rapprochement with the traditions of the “Great Church.”