

## Manichæism

Manichæism is a religion founded by the Persian Mani in the latter half of the third century. It purported to be the true synthesis of all the religious systems then known, and actually consisted of Zoroastrian Dualism, Babylonian folklore, Buddhist ethics, and some small and superficial, additions of Christian elements. As the theory of two eternal principles, good and evil, is predominant in this fusion of ideas and gives color to the whole, Manichæism is classified as a form of religious Dualism. It spread with extraordinary rapidity in both East and West and maintained a sporadic and intermittent existence in the West (Africa, Spain, France, North Italy, the Balkans) for a thousand years, but it flourished mainly in the land of its birth, (Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Turkestan) and even further East in Northern India, Western China, and Tibet, where, c. A.D. 1000, the bulk of the population professed its tenets and where it died out at an uncertain date.

## Life of the founder

Mani (Gr. *Manys*, gen. usually *Manytos*, sometimes *Manentos*, rarely *Manou*; or *Manichios*; Latin *Manes*, gen. *Manetis*; In Augustine always *Manichæus*) is a title and term of respect rather than a personal name. Its exact meaning is not quite certain, ancient Greek interpretations were *skeuos* and *homilia*, but its true derivation is probably from the Babylonian-Aramaic *Mânâ*, which, among the Mandaeans was a term for a light-spirit, *mânâ rabba* being the "Light King". It would therefore mean "the illustrious". This title was assumed by the founder himself and so completely replaced his personal name that the precise form of the latter is not known; two latinized forms, however, are handed down, Cubricus and Ubricus, and it seems likely that these forms are a corruption of the not unusual name of Shuraik. Although Mani's personal name is thus subject to doubt, there is no doubt concerning that of his father and family. His father's name was Fâtâk Bâbâk (*Ratekios*, or the "well preserved"), a citizen of Ecbatana, the ancient Median capital and a member of the famous Chascanian Gens. The boy was born A.D. 215-216 in the village of Mardinu in Babylonia, from a mother of noble (Arsacide) descent whose name variously is given as Mes, Utâchîm, Marmarjam, and Karossa. The father was evidently a man of strong religious propensities, since he left Ecbatana to join the South Babylonian Puritans (Menakkede) or Mandaeans and had his son educated in their tenets. Mani's father himself must have displayed considerable activities as a religious reformer and have been a kind of forerunner of his more famous son, in the first years of whose public life he had some share. It is not impossible that some of Patekios' writing lies imbedded in the Mandaean literature which has come down to us. Through misunderstandings the Aramaic word for disciple (*Tarbita*, stat abs. *Tarbi*), Greek and Latin sources speak of a certain *Terebinthos*, Terebinthus of Turbo, as a distinct person, whom they confound partially with Mani, partially with Patekios, and as they also forgot that Mani, besides being Patekios' great disciple, was his bodily son, and that in consequence the Scythian teacher, Scythianus, is but Fatak Babak of Hamadam, the Scythian metropolis, their account of the first origins of Manichæism differs considerably from that given in Oriental sources. Notwithstanding Kessler's ingenious researches in this field, we cannot say that the relation between Oriental and Western sources on this point has been sufficiently cleared up, and it may well be that the Western tradition going back through the "Acta Archelai" to within a century of Mani's death, contains some truth.

Mani's father was at first apparently an idolater, for, as he worshipped in a temple to his gods he is supposed to have heard a voice urging him to abstain from meat, wine, and women. In obedience to this voice he emigrated to the south and joined the Mughtasilah, or Mandaean Baptists, taking the boy Mani, with him, but possibly leaving Mani's mother behind. Here, at the age of twelve Mani is supposed to have received his first revelation. The angel Eltaum (God of the Covenant; Tamiel of Jewish Rabbinical lore?), appeared to him, bade him leave the Mandaeans, and live chastely, but to wait still some twelve years before

proclaiming himself to the people. It is not unlikely that the boy was trained up to the profession of painter, as he is often thus designated in Oriental (though late) sources.

Babylon was still a center of the pagan priesthood; here Mani became thoroughly imbued with their ancient speculations. On Sunday, 20 March, A.D. 242, Mani first proclaimed his gospel in the royal residence, Gundesapor, on the coronation day of Sapor I, when vast crowds from all parts were gathered together. "As once Buddha came to India, Zoroaster to Persia, and Jesus to the lands of the West, so came in the present time, this prophecy through me, the Mani, to the land of Babylonia", sounded the proclamation of this "Apostle of the true God". He seems to have had but little immediate success and was compelled to leave the country. For many years he traveled abroad, founding Manichæan communities in Turkestan and India. When he finally returned to Persia he succeeded in converting to his doctrine Peroz, the brother of Sapor I, and dedicated to him one of his most important works, the "Shapurikan". Peroz obtained for Mani an audience with the king and Mani delivered his prophetic message in the royal presence. We soon find Mani again a fugitive from his native land; though here and there, as in Beth Garmia, his teaching seems to have taken early root. While traveling, Mani spread and strengthened his doctrine by epistles, or encyclical letters, of which some four score are known to us by title. It is said that Mani afterwards fell into the hands of Sapor I, was cast into prison, and only released at the king's death in 274. It seems certain that Sapor's successor, Ormuzd I, was favorable to the new prophet; perhaps he even personally released him from his dungeon, unless, indeed, Mani had already effected his escape by bribing a warder and fleeing across the Roman frontier. Ormuzd's favor, however, was of little avail, as he occupied the Persian throne only a single year, and Bahram I, his successor, soon after his accession, caused Mani to be crucified, had the corpse flayed, the skin stuffed and hung up at the city gate, as a terrifying spectacle to his followers, whom he persecuted with relentless severity. The date of his death is fixed at 276-277.

## System of doctrine and discipline

### Doctrine

The key to Mani's system is his cosmogony. Once this is known there is little else to learn. In this sense Mani was a true Gnostic, as he brought salvation by knowledge. Manichæism professed to be a religion of pure reason as opposed to Christian credulity; it professed to explain the origin, the composition, and the future of the universe; it had an answer for everything and despised Christianity, which was full of mysteries. It was utterly unconscious that its every answer was a mystification or a whimsical invention; in fact, it gained mastery over men's minds by the astonishing completeness, minuteness, and consistency of its assertions.

We are giving the cosmogony as contained in Theodore Bar Khoni, embodying the results of the study of François Cumont. Before the existence of heaven and earth and all that is therein, there were two Principles, the one Good the other Bad. The Good Principle dwells in the realm of light and is called the Father of Majesty (Grandeur or Greatness, *Megethos*, Abba D'rabbutha), or the Father with the Four Faces or Persons (*tetraprosopon*), probably because Time, Light, Force, and Goodness were regarded as essential manifestations of the First Being by the Zervanites (see Cosmogony: Iranian). Outside the Father there are his Five Tabernacles or *Shechinatha*, Intelligence, Reason, Thought, Reflection, and Will. The designation of "Tabernacle" contains a play on the sound *Shechina* which means both dwelling or tent and "Divine glory or presence" and is used in the Old Testament to designate God's presence between the Cherubim. These five tabernacles were pictured on the one hand as stories of one building — Will being the topmost story — and on the other hand as limbs of God's body. He indwelt and possessed them all, so as to be, in a sense, identical with them, yet again, in a sense, to be distinct from them. They are also designated as *aeons* or worlds, *beata secula*, in St. Augustine's writings. In other sources the five limbs are: Longanimity,

Knowledge, Reason, Discretion, and Understanding. And again these five as limbs of the Father's spiritual body were sometimes distinguished from the five attributes of His pure Intelligence: Love, Faith, Truth, Highmindedness, and Wisdom. This Father of light together with the light-air and the light-earth, the former with five attributes parallel to his own, and the latter with the five limbs of Breath, Wind, Light, Water, and Fire constitute the Manichæan pleroma. This light world is of infinite extent in five directions and has only one limit, set to it below by the realm of Darkness, which is likewise infinite in all directions barring the one above, where it borders on the realm of light. Opposed to the Father of Grandeur is the King of Darkness. He is actually never called God, but otherwise, he and his kingdom down below are exactly parallel to the ruler and realm of the light above. The dark Pleroma is also triple, as it were firmament, air, and earth inverted. The first two (Heshuha and Humana) have the five attributes, members, aeons, or worlds: Pestilent Breath, Scorching Wind, Gloom, Mist, Consuming Fire; the last has the following five: Wells of Poison, Columns of Smoke, Abysmal Depths, Fetid Marshes, and Pillars of Fire. This last five fold division is clearly borrowed from ancient Chaldean ideas current in Mesopotamia.

These two powers might have lived eternally in peace, had not the Prince of Darkness decided to invade the realm of light. On the approach of the monarch of chaos the five aeons of light were seized with terror. This incarnation of evil called Satan or Ur-devil (*Diabolos protos*, *Iblis Kadim*, in Arabic sources), a monster half fish, half bird, yet with four feet and lion-headed, threw himself upward toward the confines of light. The echo of the thunder of his onrush went through the blessed aeons until it reached the Father of Majesty, who bethinking himself said: I will not send my five aeons, made for blessed repose, to engage in this war, I will go myself and give battle. Hereupon the Father of Majesty emanated the Mother of Life and the Mother of Life emanated the first man. These two constitute, with the Father, a sort of Trinity in Unity, hence the Father could say: "I myself will go". Mani here assimilates ideas already known from Gnosticism (q.v., subtitle *The Sophia Myth*) and resembling Christian doctrine, especially when it is borne in mind that "Spirit" is feminine in Hebrew-Aramaic and thus could easily be conceived as a mother of all living. The Protanthropos or "First Man" is a distinctly Irani an conception, which likewise found its way into a number of Gnostic systems, but which became the central figure in Manichæism. The myth of the origin of the world out of the members of a dead giant or Ur-man is extremely ancient, not only in Iranian speculations but also in Indian mythology (Rig-Veda, X, 90), Indeed if the myth of giant Ymir in Norse Cosmogonies is not merely a medieval invention, as is sometimes asserted, this legend must be one of the earliest possessions of the Aryan race.

According to Mani the First-Man now emanates sons as a man who puts on his armor for the combat. These five sons are the five elements opposed to the five aeons of darkness: Clear Air, Refreshing Wind, Bright Light, Life-Giving Waters, and Warming Fire. He put on first the aerial breeze, then threw over himself light as a flaming mantle, and over this light a covering of water; he surrounded himself with gusts of wind, took light as his lance and shield, and cast himself downward toward the line of danger. An angel called Nahashbat (?), carrying a crown of victory, went before him. The First-Man projected his light before him, and the King of Darkness seeing it, thought and said: "What I have sought from afar, lo, I have found it near me." He also clothed himself with his five elements, and engaged in combat with the First-Man. The struggle went in favor of the King of Darkness. The First-Man when being overcome, gave himself and his five sons as food to the five sons of Darkness, "as a man having an enemy, mixes deadly poison in a cake, and gives it to his foe." When these five resplendent deities had been absorbed by the sons of Darkness, reason was taken away from them and they became through the poisonous admixture with the sons of Darkness, like unto a man bitten by a wild dog or serpent. Thus the evil one conquered for a while. But the First-Man recovered his reason and prayed seven times to the Father of Majesty, who being moved by mercy, emanated as second creation, the Friend of the Light, this Friend of the Light emanated the Great Ban, and the Great Ban emanated the Spirit of Life. Thus a second trinity parallel to the first (Father of Light, Mother of Light, First-Man) comes into existence. The first two personages of the latter trinity have

not yet been explained and particularly the meaning of the Great Ban is a puzzle, but as in the former trinity, it is the third person, who does the actual work, the Spirit of Life (*To Zon Pneuma*), who becomes the demi-urge or world former. Like the First-Man he emanates five personalities: from his intelligence the Ornament of Splendour (Sefath Ziva, Splenditenens, *phegotatochos* in Greek and Latin sources), from his reason the Great King of Honour, from his thought Adamas, Light, from his self reflection the King of Glory, and from his will the Supporter (Sabhla, Atlas and *Omothoros* of Greek and Latin sources). These five deities were objects of special worship amongst Manichæans, and St. Augustine (*Reply to Faustus XV*) gives us descriptions of them drawn from Manichæan hymns.

These five descend to the realm of Darkness, find the First-Man in his degradation and rescue him by the word of their power; his armour remains behind, by lifting him by the right hand the Spirit of Life brings him back to the Mother of Life. The fashioning of the world now begins. Some of the sons of the Spirit of Life kill and flay the archons or sons of Darkness and bring them to the Mother of Life. She spreads out their skins and forms twelve heavens. Their corpses are hurled on the realm of Darkness and eight worlds are made, their bones form the mountain ranges. The Ornament of splendour holds the five resplendent deities by their waist and below their waist the heavens are extended. Atlas carries all on his shoulders, the Great King of Honour sits on top of the heavens and guards over all. The Spirit of Life forces the sons of Darkness to surrender some of the light which they had absorbed from the five elements and out of this he forms the sun and the moon (vessels of light, *lucidae naves* in St. Augustine) and the stars. The Spirit of Life further makes the wheels of the wind under the earth near the Supporter. The King of Glory by some creation or other enables these wheels to mount the surface of the earth and thus prevents the five resplendent deities from being set on fire by the poison of the archons. The text of Theodore bar Khoni is here so confused and corrupt that it is difficult to catch the meaning; probably wind, water, air, and fire are considered protective coverings, encircling and enveloping the gross material earth and revolving around it.

At this stage of the cosmogony the Mother of Life, the First-Man, and the Spirit of Life beg and beseech the Father of Majesty for a further creation and for a third creation he emanated the Messenger; in Latin sources this is the so-called Legatus Tertius. This Messenger emanates twelve virgins with their garments, crowns, and garlands, namely, Royalty, Wisdom, Victory, Persuasion, Purity, Truth, Faith, Patience, Righteousness, Goodness, Justice, and Light. The Messenger dwells in the sun and, coming toward these twelve virgin-vessels he commands his three attendants to make them revolve and soon they reach the height of the heavens. All this is a transparent metaphor for the planetary system and the signs of the zodiac. No sooner do the heavens rotate than the Messenger commands the Great Ban to renovate the earth and make the Great Wheels (Air, Fire, and Water) to mount. The great universe now moves but as yet there is no life of plants, beasts, or man. The production of vegetation, animal, and rational life on earth is a process of obscenity, cannibalism, abortion, and prize-fighting between the Messenger and the sons and daughters of Darkness, the details of which are better passed over. Finally, Naimrael, a female, and Ashaklun, a male devil, bring forth two children, Adam and Eve. In Adam's body were imprisoned a vast number of germs of light. He was the great captive of the Power of Evil. The Powers of Light had pity and sent a Savior, the luminous Jesus. This Jesus approached innocent Adam, awoke him from his sleep of death, made him move, drew him out of his slumber, drove away the seductive demon, and enchained far away from him the mighty female archon. Adam reflected on himself and knew that he existed. Jesus then instructed Adam and showed him the Father's dwelling in the celestial heights, and Jesus showed him his own personality, exposed to all things, to the teeth of the panther, the teeth of the elephant, devoured by the greedy, swallowed by gluttons, eaten by dogs, mixed with and imprisoned in all that exists, encompassed by the evil odours of Darkness. Mani's weird but mighty imagination had thus created a "suffering Savior" and given him the name of Jesus. But this Saviour is but the personification of the Cosmic Light as far as imprisoned in matter, therefore it is diffused throughout all nature, it is born, suffers, and dies every day, it is crucified on every tree, it is daily eaten in all food. This captive Cosmic Light is called *Jesus patibilis*. Jesus then made Adam stand up and

taste of the tree of life. Adam then looked around and wept. He mightily lifted up his voice as a roaring lion. He tore his hair and struck his breast and said, "Cursed be the creator of my body and he who bound my soul and they who have made me their slave." Man's duty henceforth is to keep his body pure from all bodily stain by practicing self-denial and to help also in the great work of purification throughout the universe. Manichæan eschatology is in keeping with its cosmogony. When, mainly through the activity of the elect, all light particles have been gathered together, the messenger, or Legatus Tertius appears, the Spirit of Life comes from the west, the First Man with his hosts comes from north, south, and east, together with all light aeons, and all perfect Manichæans. Atlas, the World Supporter throws his burden away, the Ornament of Splendour above lets go, and thus heaven and earth sink into the abyss. A universal conflagration ensues and burns on till nothing but lightless cinders remain. This fire continues during 1486 years, during which the torments of the wicked are the delights of the just. When the separation of light from darkness is finally completed, all angels of light who had functions in the creation return on high; the dark world-soul sinks away in the depth, which is then closed forever and eternal tranquillity reigns in the realm of light, no more to be invaded by darkness. With regard to the after-death of the individual, Manichæism taught a threefold state prepared for the Perfect, the Hearers, and the Sinners (non-Manichæans). The souls of the first are after death received by Jesus, who is sent by the First-Man accompanied by three aeons of light and the Light Maiden. They give the deceased a water vessel, a garment, a turban, a crown, and a wreath of light. In vain do evil angels lie in his path, he scorns them and on the ladder of praise he mounts first to the moon, then to the First-Man, the Sun, the Mother of Life, and finally the Supreme Light. The bodies of the perfect are purified by sun, moon, and stars; their light-particles, set free, mount to the First-Man and are formed into minor deities, surrounding his person. The fate of the Heavens is ultimately the same as that of the Perfect, but they have to pass through a long purgatory before they arrive at eternal bliss. Sinners, however, must, after death wander about in torment and anguish, surrounded by demons, and condemned by the angels, till the end of the world, when they are, body and soul, thrown into hell.

## Discipline

To set the light-substance free from the pollution of matter was the ultimate aim of all Manichæan life. Those who entirely devoted themselves to this work were the "Elect" or the "Perfect", the *Primates Manichaeorum*; those who through human frailty felt unable to abstain from all earthly joys, though they accepted Manichæan tenets, were "the Hearers", *auditores*, or catechumens. The former bear a striking similarity to Buddhist monks, only with this difference that they were always itinerant, being forbidden to settle anywhere permanently. The life of these ascetics was a hard one. They were forbidden to have property, to eat meat or drink wine, to gratify any sexual desire, to engage in any servile occupation, commerce or trade, to possess house or home, to practice magic, or to practice any other religion. Their duties were summed up in the three *signacula*, i.e. seals or closures, that of the mouth, of the hands, and of the breast (*oris, manuum, sinus*). The first forbade all evil words and all evil food. Animal food roused the demon of Darkness within man, hence only vegetables were allowed to the perfect. Amongst vegetables, some, as melons and fruit containing oil were specially recommended, as they were thought to contain many light particles, and by being consumed by the perfect those light particles were set free. The second forbade all actions detrimental to the light-substance, slaying of animals, plucking of fruit, etc. The third forbade all evil thoughts, whether against the Manichæan faith or against purity. St. Augustine (especially "De Moribus Manich.") strongly inveighs against the Manichæan's repudiation of marriage. They regarded it as an evil in itself because the propagation of the human race meant the continual imprisonment of the light-substance in matter and a retarding of the blissful consummation of all things; maternity was a calamity and a sin and Manichæans delighted to tell of the seduction of Adam by Eve and her final punishment in eternal damnation. In consequence there was a danger that the act of generation, rather than the act of unchastity was abhorred, and that his was a real danger Augustine's writings testify.

The number of the Perfect was naturally very small and in studying Manichæism one is particularly struck by the extreme paucity of individual Perfecti known in history. The vast bulk of Mani's adherents — ninety-nine out of every hundred — were Hearers. They were bound by Mani's Ten Commandments only, which forbade idolatry, mendacity, avarice, murder (i.e. all killing), fornication, theft, seduction to deceit, magic, hypocrisy, (secret infidelity to Manichæism), and religious indifference. The first positive duty seems to have been the maintenance and almost the worship of the Elect. They supplied them with vegetables for food and paid them homage on bended knee, asking for their blessing. They regarded them as superior beings, nay, collectively, they were thought to constitute the aeon of righteousness. Beyond these ten negative commandments there were the two duties common to all, prayer and fasting.

Prayer was obligatory four times a day: at noon, late in the afternoon, after sunset, and three hours later. Prayer was made facing the sun or, in the night, the moon; when neither sun nor moon was visible, then the North, the throne of the Light-King. It was preceded by a ceremonial purification with water or for lack of water with some other substance in the Mohammedan fashion. The daily prayers were accompanied by twelve prostrations and addressed to the various personalities in the realm of light: the Father of Majesty, the First-Man, the Legatus Tertius, the Paraclete (Mani), the Five Elements, and so on. They consist mainly of a string of laudatory epithets and contain but little supplication. As time and attitude of prayer were intimately connected with astronomical phenomena, so likewise was the duty of fasting. All fasted on the first day of the week in honor of the sun, the Perfect also fasted on the second day in honor of the moon. All kept the fast during two days after every new moon; and once a year at the full moon, and at the beginning of the first quarter of the moon. Moreover, a monthly fast, observed till sunset, was begun on the eighth day of the month.

Of rites and ceremonies among the Manichæans but very little is known to us. They had one great solemnity, that of the *Bema*, the anniversary of Mani's death. This was kept with a vigil of prayers and spiritual reading. An empty chair was placed on a raised platform to which five steps led up. Further details are as yet unknown. St. Augustine complains that although Manichæans pretended to be Christians, their feast of the death of Mani exceeded in solemnity that of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Manichæans must have possessed a kind of baptism and eucharist. The epistle on baptism, which occurred among the sacred literature of the Manichæans, is unfortunately lost, and in Oriental sources the matter is not referred to, but Christian sources suppose the existence of both these rites. Of greater importance than baptism was the *Consolamentum* or "Consolation", an imposition of hands by one of the Elect by which a Hearer was received amongst their number. The Manichæan hierarchy and constitution is still involved in obscurity. Mani evidently intended to provide a supreme head for the multitude of his followers. He even decided that his successor in this dignity should reside in Babylon. This high priesthood is known in Arabic sources as the *Imamate*. In the East it seems to have possessed at least some temporary importance, in the West it seems hardly known or recognized. No list of these supreme Pontiffs of Manichæism has come down to us; hardly a name or two is known to history. It is doubtful even whether the chair of Mani did not remain vacant for long periods. On the duties and privileges of the *Imamate* we possess at present no information. According to Western and Eastern sources the Manichæan Church was divided into five hierarchical classes; St. Augustine names them *magistri*, *episcopi*, *presbyteri*, *electi*, and *auditores*; this Christianized terminology represents in Manichæan mystical language the sons of meekness, of reason, of knowledge, of mystery, and of understanding. Mani's astrological predilections for the number five, so evident in his cosmogony, evidently suggested this division for his Church or kingdom of the light on earth. The Teachers and Administrators (*magistri* and *episcopi*) are probably an adaptation of the *legontes* and *drontes*, the speakers and the doers, known in Greek and Babylonian mysteries; and the name "priests" is probably taken over from the Sabian Kura.

With regard to the relation of Manichæism to Christianity two things are clear:

(a) Some connection with Christianity was intended from the very first by Mani himself, it was not an after-thought, introduced when Manichæism came in touch with the West, as is sometimes asserted. Christianity was the predominant religion in Osroene, and perhaps the principle religion in all Mesopotamia in Mani's time. Mani, whose object was to found a system, comprehensive of all religions then known, could not but try to incorporate Christianity. In the first words of his proclamation on the coronation day of Sapor I, he mentioned Jesus, who had come to the countries of the West.

(b) The connection was purely external and artificial. The substance of Manichæism was Chaldean astrology and folklore cast in a rigid dualistic mould; if Christianity was brought in, it was only through force of historical circumstances. Christianity could not be ignored. In consequence

- Mani proclaimed himself the Paraclete promised by Jesus;
- rejected the whole of the Old Testament, but admitted as much of the New as suited him; in particular he rejected the Acts of the Apostles, because it told of the descent of the Holy Ghost in the past. The gospels were corrupted in many places, but where a text seemed to favor him the Manichee knew how to parade it. One has to read St. Augustine's anti-Manichæan disputes to realize the extreme ingenuity with which scripture texts were collected and interpreted.
- Though Mani called himself the Paraclete he claimed no divinity but with show of humility styled himself "Apostle of Jesus Christ by the providence of God the Father"; a designation which is obviously adapted from the heading of the Pauline Epistles. Mani, however, was the Apostle of Jesus Christ, i.e. the messenger of Christ's promise, that Paraclete whom he sent (apostolos from apostellos, to send) Mani's blasphemous assumption was thus toned down a little to Christian ears.
- Jesus Christ was to Mani but an aeon or persistent personification of Light in the world.; as far as it had already been set free it was the luminous Jesus, or Jesus patibilis.
- The historical Jesus of Nazareth was entirely repudiated by Mani. "The son of a poor widow" (Mary), "the Jewish Messiah whom the Jews crucified", "a devil who was justly punished for interfering in the work of the Aeon Jesus", such was, according to Mani, the Christ whom Christians worshipped as God. Mani's Christology was purely Docetic, his Christ appeared to be man, to live, suffer, and die to symbolize the light suffering in this world. Though Mani used the term "Evangel" for his message, his Evangel was clearly in no real sense that of the Christians.
- Mani finally beguiled the unwary by the use of such apparently Christian terms as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to designate divine personalities, but a glance at his cosmogony shows how flimsy was the disguise. Nevertheless, spoke so cautiously, urging only faith in god, His light, His power, and His wisdom (in reality "the Father of Majesty"; the sun and moon; the five blessed aeons, his sons, and the Manichæan religion), that they deceived many.

## History in the East

Notwithstanding the bitterest persecution by the Sassanides in Persia as well as by the emperors at Rome, Manichæism spread very rapidly. Its greatest success was achieved in countries to the east of Persia. In A.D. 1000 the Arab historian Al-Beruni wrote: "The majority of the Eastern Turks, the inhabitants of China and Tibet, and a number in India belong to the religion of Mani". The recent finds of Manichæan literature and painting at Turfan corroborate this statement. Within a generation after Mani's death his followers had settled on the Malabar Coast and gave the name to Minigrama, i.e. "Settlement of Mani". The Chinese inscriptions of Kara Belgassum, once thought to refer to the Nestorians, doubtless have reference to the existence of Manichæism. The great Turkish tribe of the Tuguzguz in 930 threatened reprisals on Mohammedans in their power if the Manichæans in Samarcand were molested by the Prince of Chorazan, in

whose dominion they were very numerous. Detailed information on the extreme Eastern Manichæans is still lacking. In Persia and Babylonia proper, Manichæism seems never to have been the predominant religion, but the Manichæans enjoyed there a large amount of prosperity and toleration under Mohammedan rule. Some caliphs were actually favorable to Manichæism, and it had a number of secret sympathizers throughout Islam. Though not numerous in the capitol, Bagdad, they were scattered in the villages and hamlets of the Irak. Their prosperity and intimacy of social intercourse with non-Manichæans aroused the indignation of the Puritan party amongst Mani's followers, and this led to the formation of the heresy of Miklas, a Persian ascetic in the eighth century.

As Manichæism adopted three Christian apocrypha, the Gospel of Thomas, the Teaching of Addas, and the Shepherd of Hermas, the legend was soon formed that Thomas, Addas, and Hermas were the first great apostles of Mani's system. Addas is supposed to have spread it in the Orient (*ta tes anatoles*), Thomas in Syria, and Hermas in Egypt. Manichæism was certainly known in Judea before Mani's death; it was brought to Eleutheropolis by Akouas in 274 (Epiphanius, "Haer.", LXVI, I). St. Ephrem (378) complained that no country was more infected with Manichæism than Mesopotamia in his day, and Manichæism maintained its ground in Edessa even in A.D. 450. The fact that it was combated by Eusebius of Emesus, George and Appolinaris of Laodicea, Diodorus of Tarsus, John (Chrysostom) of Antioch, Epiphanius of Salamis, and Titus of Bostra shows how early and ubiquitous was the danger of Manichæism in Western Asia. About A.D. 404, Julia, a lady of Antioch, tried by her riches and culture to pervert the city of Gaza to Manichæism, but without success. In Jerusalem St. Cyril had many converted Manichæans amongst his catechumens and refuted their errors at length. St. Nilus knew of secret Manichæans in Sinai before A.D. 430.

In no country did Manichæism enter more insidiously into Christian life than in Egypt. One of the governors of Alexandria under Constantine was a Manichæan, who treated the Catholic bishops with unheard-of severity. St. Athanasius says of Anthony the Hermit (330) that he forbade all intercourse with "Manichæans and other heretics".

In the Eastern Roman Empire it came to the zenith of its power about A.D. 375-400, but then rapidly declined. But in the middle of the sixth century it once more rose into prominence. The Emperor Justinian himself disputed with them; Photinus the Manichæan publicly disputed with Paul the Persian. Manichæism obtained adherents among the highest classes of society. Barsymes the Nestorian prefect of Theodora, was an avowed Manichæan. But this recrudescence of Manichæism was soon suppressed.

Soon, however, whether under the name of Paulicians, or Bogomiles, it again invaded the Byzantine Empire, after having lain hidden for a time on Musselman territory. The following are the Imperial edicts launched against Manichæism: Diocletian (Alexandria, 31 March, 296) commands the Proconsul of Africa to persecute them, he speaks of them as a sordid and impure sect recently come from Persia, which he is determined to destroy root and branch (*stirpitus amputari*). Its leaders and propagators must be burnt, together with their books; the rank and file beheaded, people of note condemned to the mines, and their goods confiscated. This edict remained at least nominally in force under Constantine, and Constantius. Under Julian the Apostate, Manichæism seems to have been tolerated. Valentinian I and Gratian, though tolerant of other sects, made exception of the Manichæans. Theodosius I, by an edict of 381, declared Manichæans to be without civil rights and incapable of testamentary disposition. In the following year he condemned them to death under the name of Encratites, Saccophores, and Hydroparastates. Valentinian II confiscated their goods, annulled their wills, and sent them into exile. Honorius in 405 renewed the edicts of his predecessors, and fined all governors of cities or provinces who were remiss in carrying out his orders; he invalidated all their contracts, declared them outlaws and public criminals. In 445 Valentinian III renewed the edicts of his predecessors; Anastasius condemned all Manichæans to death; Justin and Justinian decreed the death penalty, not only against Manichæans who remained obstinate in their heresy, but even

against converts from Manichæism who remained in touch with their former co-religionists, or who did not at once denounce them to the magistrates. Heavy penalties were likewise decreed against all State officials who did not denounce their colleagues, if infected with Manichæism, and against all those who retained Manichæan books. It was a war of extermination and was apparently successful, within the confines of the Byzantine Empire.

## History in the West

In the West the special home of Manichæism was in Proconsular Africa, where it seems to have had a second apostle inferior only to Mani, a further incarnation of the Paraclete, Adimantus. Previous to 296 Julian the Proconsul had written to the emperor that the Manichæans troubled the peace of the population and caused injury to the towns. After the edict of Diocletian we hear no more of it until the days of St. Augustine. Its most notorious champion was Faustus of Mileve. Born at Mileve of poor parents, he had gone to Rome, and being converted to Manichæism he began to study rhetoric somewhat late in life. He was not a man of profound erudition, but he was a suave and unctuous speaker. His fame in Manichæan circles was very great. He was a Manichæan *episcopus* and boasted of having left his wife and children and all he had for his religion. He arrived at Carthage in 383, and was arrested, but the Christians obtained the commutation of his sentence to banishment and even that was not carried out. About A.D. 400 he wrote a work in favor of Manichæism, or rather against Christianity, in which he tried to wrest the New Testament to the support of Manichæism. St. Augustine answered him in thirty-three books embodying verbally much of his teaching. On 28 and 29 August 392, St. Augustine had refuted a certain Fortunatus in public discussion held in the Baths of Sossius. Fortunatus acknowledged defeat and disappeared from the town. On 7 Dec., 404, St. Augustine held a dispute with Felix, a Manichæan priest. He convinced him of the error of his ways and he made him say: Anathema to Mani. St. Augustine knew how to use severity to extirpate the heresy. Victorinus, a deacon had become an *auditor* and propagandist of the Manichæans. He was discovered, upon which he apparently repented and asked for reconciliation, but St. Augustine punished him and banished him from the town, warning all people against him. He would not hear of his repentance unless he denounced all the Manichæans he knew in the province. St. Augustine did not write against Manichæism during the last twenty five years of his life; hence it is thought that the sect decreased in importance during that time. Yet in 420, Ursus, the imperial prefect, arrested some Manichæans in Carthage and made them recant. When the Arian Vandals conquered Africa the Manichæans thought of gaining the Arian clergy by secretly entering their ranks, but Huneric (477-484), King of the Vandals, realizing the danger, burnt many of them and transported the others. Yet at the end of the sixth century Gregory the Great looked upon Africa as the hotbed of Manichæism. The same warning was repeated by Gregory II (701), and Nicholas II (1061).

The spread of Manichæism in Spain and Gaul is involved in obscurity on account of the uncertainty concerning the real teaching of Priscillian.

It is well known how St. Augustine (383) found a home at Rome in the Manichæan community, which must have been considerable. According to the "Liber Pontificalis" Pope Miltiades (311-314) had already discovered adherents to the sect in the city. Valentinian's edict (372), addressed to the city prefect, was clearly launched mainly against Roman Manichæans. The so called "Ambrosiaster" combated Manichæism in a great many of his writings (370-380). In the years 384-388 a special sect of Manichæans arose in Rome called Martari, or Mat-squatters, who, supported by a rich man called Constantius, tried to start a sort of monastic life for the Elect in contravention of Mani's command that the Elect should wander about the world preaching the Manichæan Gospel. The new sect found the bitterest opposition amongst their co-religionists. In Rome they seem to have made extraordinary endeavors to conceal themselves by almost complete conformity with Christian customs. From the middle of the sixth century onward Manichæism apparently died out in the West. Though a number of secret societies and dualistic sects may have existed here and

there in obscurity, there is apparently no direct and conscious connection with the Prophet of Babylon and his doctrine. Yet when the Paulicians and Bogomili from Bulgaria came in contact with the West in the eleventh century, and eastern missionaries driven out by the Byzantine emperors taught dualist doctrines in the North of Italy and the South of France they found the leaven of Manichæism still so deeply pervading the minds of the many that they could make it ferment and rise into the formidable Catharist heresies.

## Manichæan writers

Manichæism, like Gnosticism, was an intellectual religion, it despised the simplicity of the crowd. As it professed to bring salvation through knowledge, ignorance was sin. Manichæism, in consequence, was literary and refined, its founder was a fruitful writer, and so were many of his followers. Of all this literary output only fragments are at present extant. No Manichæan treatise has come down to us in its entirety. Mani wrote in Persian and Babylonian Aramaic, apparently using either language with equal facility. The following seven titles of works of his have come down to us:

- "Shapurakan", i.e. "Princely", because it was dedicated to Peroz, the brother of Sapor I (written in Syrian). It was a kind of Manichæan eschatology, dealing in three chapters with the dissolution of Hearers, Elect, and Sinners. It was written about A.D. 242.
- "The Book of Mysteries", polemical and dogmatic in character.
- "The Book of the Giants", probably about cosmogonic figures.
- "The Book of Precepts for Hearers", with appendix for the Elect.
- "The Book of Life-giving", written in Greek, probably of considerable size.
- "The Book of Pragmateia", contents totally unknown.
- "The Gospel", written in Persian, of which the chapters began with successive letters of the alphabet.

Besides these more extensive works, no less than seventy-six letters or brief treatises are enumerated, but it is not always clear which of these are by Mani himself, which by his immediate successors. The "Epistola Fundamenti", so well known in Latin writers, is probably the "Treatise of the Two Elements", mentioned as first of the seventy-six numbers in Arabic sources. Small and often unintelligible fragments in Pahlevi and in Sogdian(?) have recently been found in Chinese Turkestan by T.W.K. Mueller. The "Epistola Fundamenti" is extensively quoted in St. Augustine's refutation and also in Theodore bar Khoni, and Titus of Bostra, and the "Acta Archelai". Of Manichæan writers the following names have come down to us: Agapius (Photius, Cod. 179), of Asia Minor; Aphthonius of Egypt (Philostorgium, "Hist. Eccl.", III, 15) Photinus refuted by Paul the Persian (Mercati, "Per la vita de Paulo il Persiano"), Adimantus, refuted by Augustine.

## Anti-Manichæan writers

St. Ephraem (306-373); his treatise against the Manichæans was published in poems (59-73) in the Roman edition with Latin translation and again by K. Kessler in his "Mani", I, 262-302; Hegemonius is said by Heracleon of Chalcedon to be the author of the "Acta disputationis Archelai episcopi Mesopotamiae et Manetis haeresiarchae". This important work on Manichæism, written originally in Greek or perhaps in Syriac, between A.D. 300 and 350 has come down to us only in a Latin translation, though small fragments exist in Greek. The most recent edition is that of M. Beeson (Berlin, 1906). It contains an imaginary dispute between Archalaus, Bishop of Charcar, and Mani, himself. The dispute is but a literary device, but the work ranks as the first class authority on Manichæism. It was translated into English in the Ante-Nicene library.

Alexander of Lycopolis published a short treatise against Manichæism, last edited by A. Brinkmann (Leipzig, 1895). Serapion of Thmuis (c. 350) is credited by St. Jerome with an excellent work against

Manichæans. This work has recently been restored to its original form by A. Brinkmann "Sitz. ber der Preuss. Acad. Berlin"(1895), 479sq. Titus of Bostra (374) published four books against the Manichæans, two containing arguments from reason and two arguments from Scripture and theology against the heresy. They have come down to us complete only in a Syriac version (LaGarde, "Tit. Bost. contra Manichæos Libri IV", Berlin, 1859), but part of the original Greek is published in Pitra's "Analecta sacra. et class." (1888), I, 44-46. St. Epiphanius of Salamis devoted his great work "Adversus Haereses" (written about 374) mainly to refutation of Manichæism. The other heresies receive but brief notices and even Arianism seems of less importance. Theodoret of Cyprus (458), "De haereticorum fabulis", in four books (P.G. LXXXIII), gives an exposition of Manichæism. Didymus the Blind, president of the catechetical school at Alexandria (345-395), wrote a treatise in eighteen chapters against Manichæans. St. John Damascene (c.750) wrote a "Dialogue against Manichæans" (P.G. XCIV), and a shorter "Discussion of John the Orthodox with a Manichæan" (P.G. XCVI); Photius (891) wrote four books against the Manichæans, and is a valuable witness of the Paulician phase of Manichæism. Paul the Persian (c.529) "Disputation with Photinus the Manichæan" (P.G. LXXXVIII, 528). Zacharias Rhetor (c.536), "Seven theses against Manichæans", fragments in P.G. LXXXV, 1143-. Heraclian (c.510) wrote twenty books against Manichæans (Photius, Cod. 86). Amongst Latin writers St. Augustine is foremost, his works being "De utilitate credendi"; "De moribus Manichæorum"; "De duabus animabus"; "Contra Fortunatum"; "De actis cum Felice", "De Natura Boni", "Contra Secundinum", "Contra Adversarium Legis et Prophetarum" in "Opera", VIII (Paris, 1837). Some in English. "De Genesi contra Manichæos lib. II." Ambrosiaster (370-380): for his commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles and his "Quaestiones V. et N. Testamenti" see A. Souter, "A Study of Ambrosiaster" (1907); Marcus Victorinus (380), "Ad Justinum Manichæum".

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SOURCES.--Theodore bar Khoni, Nestorian Bishop of Cascar (c. end of sixth century), wrote a book of "Scholia" or Memoirs. Book XI of this work contains a list of "sects which arose at different times"; among these he gives an account of the Manichæans and relates at length the Manichæan cosmogony. This is especially interesting and valuable as he retains the original Syriac designations of the cosmogonic figures and probably gives Mani's own account verbally from the Fundamental Epistle; in Pognon, Inscriptions mandaites des coupes de Khouabir (Paris, 1898), French tr. (see also M. Noldere Wiener, Zeitsch. Kund. Morg., XII, 355); Abu' Lfaradsh usually called En Nadim ("The Shining One"), an Arab historian who in A.D. 908 wrote his Firhist al'ulum or Compendium of Sciences". The chapters dealing with the Manichæans were published in German tr. by Fluegel in his Mani. Al Biruni, an Arabic chronologist (A.D. 1000), in his Chronology of Eastern Nations, Eng. ed. Sachau, Or transl. Fund (London, 1879), and India, Eng. ed. Sachau, truebn, Or. ser. (London, 1888)

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