



Pistis Sophia: A Gnostic Gospel

G. R. S. Mead

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IN the Introduction (pp. xxxv f.) to the first edition (1896), the translator wrote: "In presenting the following translation to the English-reading public, I may say that I should not have ventured on such an undertaking if any Coptic scholar had undertaken the task, or I had heard that such a task was contemplated. In a matter of so great difficulty every possible liability to error should be eliminated, and it stands to reason that the translation of a translation must needs be but an apology for a first-hand version. Nevertheless I am not without predecessors. The Coptic MS. itself is in the first place a translation, so that even Coptic scholars must give us the version of a translation. I am persuaded also that the anonymous and very imperfect French translation (1856) in the Appendix to Migne's Dictionnaire des Apocryphes (vol. i.) is made from Schwartze's Latin version (1851) and not from the Coptic text. C. W. King in *The Gnostics and their Remains* (2nd ed., 1887) has also translated a number of pages of the *Pistis Sophia* from Schwartze. Some three or four years ago Mr. Nutt, King's publisher, sent out a notice proposing the publication of the whole of King's translation, but the project fell through. Last year (1895) I offered to edit this translation of King's, but was informed that the literary legatee of the deceased scholar was of the opinion that it would be unfair to his memory to publish a MS. that was in so incomplete a condition.

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