

# *Gnosis* versus Theology

by: Douglas Lockhart

*The Church long ago mis-identified the locus of human freedom.  
Because of this error, the whole of Western civilization is crashing  
against a brick wall: Father Sylvan*

David Needleman: *Lost Christianity*<sup>1</sup>

## The Emotional Vortex

Christianity lost contact with its original vision before the end of the 1st century. This is not to say that its original vision was in itself original, just that it had in its grasp a life-transforming process that it eventually mislaid. So when I came across Jacob Needleman's book *Lost Christianity*, and read the insightful and sometimes caustic remarks of Father Sylvan (see my essay 'The Enigmatic Father Sylvan'), I suspected I was on the right track. And not just because Needleman's evidence reflected my own, or because Father Sylvan's take on things seemed to support my long-held contention that Christianity's life-force was moribund, but because the evidence stacking up for such an opinion could be detected throughout Christianity's long and tortuous history. What I hadn't realized, however, was that this lost process of Christianity's was tied to what many considered to be its most boring aspect: its continual harping about moral behavior. The idea of being good seemed to have overpowered Christianity to such an extent that its whole character had become one of frowning disapproval. But buried deep in that judgmental attitude lay the kernel of something breathtakingly transformative: the realization that our greatest enemy was our wayward emotions. Father Sylvan sums up this situation with precision when he says: "Do not make a religion of your better moments. That way lies the corruption of our teaching."<sup>2</sup>

The teaching Father Sylvan is referring to concerns the real nature of man;<sup>3</sup> if a teaching doesn't reflect this real nature, then it is, in Father Sylvan's spiritual scheme, fundamentally useless in spite of being helpful in a social context. The mercy and compassion of a teaching do not reflect the heart of religion, we are told; it is "the conditions under which it brings them" that are important.<sup>4</sup> The language of real Christianity is not for our emotions; it is for our hearts and our minds in the sense meant by St. Paul when he says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind."<sup>5</sup> It is the mind that has to be renewed, and that is not

accomplished through moral strictures, or through doctrines dutifully believed, but through the shock of waking up to our constantly submerged mental state and to our emotional dishonesty. The crux of the matter lies not in whether we believe in Christianity's doctrinal propositions, but in our capacity to unhitch ourselves from our deeply conditioned and reactive minds. *That* was the message of early Christianity, and it is a message scrambled beyond recognition as it developed into a highly organized religion with power and authority.

What has to be understood is that this teaching was linked to previous expressions of the same thing; it was not a revelation never before encountered. In this sense there were Christians on the planet long before Christianity appeared on the scene. And in this sense "Christ" is not Jesus' surname, nor is it a description of something that Christians have to put on like a jacket; it is the title of what was believed by the Nazoraeans sect to be their God-appointed Messiah (not the Messiah *as* God), a title transformed by St. Paul into a piece of theological wizardry to stand for that very renewing of the mind Father Sylvan draws to our attention. Theologians and historians have often wondered why Paul doesn't deal with the facts of Jesus' life, and this is probably the reason. He wasn't interested in the historical Jesus; he was interested only in the consciousness of Jesus, a consciousness he recognized as generic to the spiritual life of *all* human beings. To "put on Christ" was not, in my opinion, about possession *by* Jesus; it was about finding the equivalent of his special consciousness within ourselves.

This could be why Christianity was considered to be of universal significance early on; the discovery at Christianity's core was not that it had a better grocery list of beliefs than anyone else, but that it had a teaching that applied directly to the human condition. Hence the curious disciplining aspect of Jesus' own teachings; he was heightening the awareness of his disciples through a moment-by-moment recognition that they were asleep on their feet ("could you not watch one hour?"), that they did not know what they were doing most of the time ("Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"), and that he, in that moment of time, was their only hope of ever finding out what their problem really was. He was asking them to wake up *inside* their reactions and catch sight of themselves as they faced the onslaught of daily life – hence his curious over-the-top moral directives. It was not enough to merely do the right thing as far as the law was concerned; it was a matter of *fully occupying the space in which they moved and had their being*. That was what mattered, and it mattered because it heralded the presence of a real person capable of making real decisions.

Christianity could be said to have been left with an empty teaching, a husk of its previous intelligence concerning the self. Realizing in the 4th century that emotional identification with Jesus could lead to all kinds of aberrant behavior, the Roman Church imposed rules and regulations on the monasteries to bring their

emotionally driven monks under control, and at the same time set about eradicating ideas they considered heretical. Some very strange things were surfacing in the name of Christianity, so doctrinal standardization was necessary, but the *gnosis* (knowledge) of which genuine Christianity was composed fell under the same shadow as the Gnostic beliefs then being attacked, and that led to a rejection of anything even vaguely suggestive of an alternative spiritual system. Anything that veered from this new standardized set of doctrines was termed Gnostic and dismissed as heretical, those who persisted in their *gnosis* branded as deviants and ostracized.

By the end of the 4th century the Roman church became the central organizing influence in Christendom, its consolidated authority and literalist interpretations of Scripture carrying it away from an understanding of its own *gnosis*. As a result of the clean-up operation that followed, the idea of *gnosis* became anathema to the ruling hierarchy, and this led to Christianity being scrambled on two fronts, not one. Those aware of the faith's deeper teaching were then in as much danger of reprisal from Church authorities as those who had only a distorted or limited version of the original Christian *gnosis*, and this resulted in Christianity's core teaching being outlawed and associated with the often bizarre offerings of some Gnostic groups. Father Sylvan unravels this complicated situation for us when he says, "'Gnosticism' is not a heresy of the Church, but a 'heresy' of gnosis."<sup>6</sup> In saying this he shows himself to have had a coherent historical sense of what was going on beneath the surface.

### **The Mysterious Race of Perfected Men**

But the initiates of so-called Gnosticism were not all the muddle-headed idiots Church investigators made them out to be; many were skilled scientists of the mind armed with what is now recognized as an exact spiritual vocabulary. It can be argued, of course, that the Church's reaction to these groups was to be expected – much of the imagery and symbolism used by Gnostic thinkers was so obscure as to be utterly unintelligible – but there is little excuse for that kind of reaction today. Recent research by Gnostic scholars such as Elaine Pagels and Simone Petrement have shown some of these groups to have been hugely sophisticated in their approach. Even Jean Doresse's 1958 study of the Egyptian Gnostics came to the same conclusion, particularly in relation to groups such as the Naassene, the Peratae, the Sethians and the Ophites. In Doresse's view, these Jewish-oriented Christian groups were basically the same heresy under different names, the connecting point between them being the high regard in which they held Jesus' brother James.<sup>7</sup> There was, Doresse believed, an underlying continuity of thought allied to Jesus that, although difficult to interpret due to complexity of image and symbol, was nevertheless coherent at base in relation to particular groups.<sup>8</sup> Their ideas were not unintelligible. The basic code used by these groups had in fact been

broken by the Church Fathers; the problem was they did not understand the significance of what they read. And for very good reason, these related groups had resorted to subterfuge in the face of a growing persecution.

Doresse gives us the basic code being used, and it is startling because it has to do with the human senses, not with theological constructions built around Jesus. The whole scheme of these interrelated Jewish-Christian groups had to do with the human brain, with the inner landscape of consciousness and sense-perceptions allied to a system of transformation. The brain was Eden, the membranes enveloping the brain were the heavens, and the head was paradise. The Church Father Epiphanius confirms these findings in connection with the Ophites. In the same allegorical manner he observes that there is a river with branches flowing out of Eden (the brain), and these branches he identifies with the human senses. The eye is the river Phison, the ear is the river Geon, and the breath is the river Tigris. Doresse's footnotes reveal that "the land of bondage" (Egypt) equaled the evil of matter; so when a spiritual master "left Egypt", it simply meant that he had died. And a vision in the heavens (meaning high up in the head) of a coiled serpent was, equally, not a reference to evil, but to energy. So when in their teachings these groups spoke of Christ "mastering the serpent", they did not mean that he had mastered evil, but that he had, as in the yogic tradition of India, brought the serpent *as energy* under control.<sup>9</sup> This suggests, as stated earlier, that Christianity's original *gnosis* was not in itself unique, but concerned with a consciousness-transforming process belonging to the body as Morris Berman correctly deduces. The question being debated today, however, is whether the more disparate of these Gnostic groups were in any real sense Christian, or actually independent of Christianity in spite of their Christian gloss.

Some scholars stress the independence factor; others vindicate heresy hunters like Irenaeus by appearing to prove that the Gnostics were all heretical Christians. The truth, however, may be a little more complex. There is good reason to think that no precise source for many of the Gnostic groups ever existed, but that those of suspected Jewish origin originated in the early Ebionite sect, a strict Jewish-Christian group related to the Jerusalem Church of the Apostles through Jesus' brother James – hence their high regard for James. This form of Gnosticism was categorized as a low Christological formation by the Church Fathers, that is, it rejected the idea of Jesus being divine in his own right; he had been an ordinary man and a prophet, end of story. This view later became the basis for the Arian heresy, which was certainly Christian in origin, and resulted in Roman Christianity being almost displaced as the ruling faction. Other Gnostic groups may just have borrowed the myths of Christianity and woven them into tapestries of thought reflecting independent experiences of internal reality. True as I think this probably was, it overlooks the Jewish-Christian input, just as it does *gnosis*-oriented Christians hiding in the monasteries for fear of being detected.

Another factor is that not all of the Gnostic texts were of the same caliber; many of the texts did descend to the level of gibberish, a point noted by the French Gnostic scholar Simone Petrement as indicative of late Gnosticism. In her opinion early Gnosticism carried the greater coherence, late Gnosticism becoming progressively incoherent. In her references to the Naassenes and the Ophites, in particular, she sums up these Jewish-Christian groups as understanding the term Gnostic to mean Christian, and that suggests they were reading the word *gnosis* in the same sense as Bishop Irenaeus did when he described heretics as “Gnostics falsely so-called,”<sup>10</sup> so making Christians Gnostic by definition. Petrement’s summation is that the Gnostic heretics probably used the term Gnostic in all innocence, and that this usage did not mean that they saw themselves as a sect within Christianity, but as in some sense carrying the original meaning of Christianity.

### **The Sheep and the Goats**

Christian heretics of the early centuries are not talked of much from the pulpit; they are presumed away under the guise of deviants who do not require explanation. There was, it is believed, a single community of believers called Christians in the beginning and the heretics were those who invented grotesque notions about Christ and had to be banished from that community. It’s that simple. There was a single doctrine of Jesus as the Christ of God, and in unbroken succession we are recipients of that doctrine because the Church has kept its eye steadily on the central truth of Jesus’ divinity and mission. You either accept or reject the fact of Jesus’ divine mission, and on the basis of your decision end up in heaven or hell. End of story. End result of two thousand years of faithfulness to a set of ideas considered to be divinely revealed truth. That, basically, is the Christian argument, and it is unacceptable. There never was a simple community with one set of beliefs; there were dozens of Christian communities, and those eventually deemed heretical were those that lost out in the power struggle with Rome. Christian thinking on and around this matter makes nonsense of the historical facts, and serious scholars (many of them Christian) reject the idea that this was the regulating will of God at work. In its early days, as the Nag Hammadi scrolls demonstrate, Christianity was multiform in its approaches to Jesus and his teachings.

It was not until the 4th century that this regulating will of God got under way at the hands of Bishop Athanasius. In his 39th Festal Letter he let it be known that only certain books were to be considered inspired, and therefore canonical. From that moment the lines of demarcation were drawn, the books not on the list being marked down as apocryphal, or heretical, and proclaimed anathema. The scene was now set for conflict, those who had considered themselves good Christians on Monday reduced to being heretics on Tuesday. The dividing line was in place, the sheep and the goats were about to be separated – with a vengeance. And all

because Athanasius was “influenced by the need and advantage of the Church,” a statement of simple truth laden with dire implications for the future of Christianity.

The effect of Athanasius’ 39th Festal Letter on the broad sweep of Christian communities was one of fear – those in possession of the banned writings (previously termed gospels) had to get rid of them. It was either that or own up to holding a view of Jesus at variance with that of this powerful faction. And Athanasius knew what this meant for these individuals; he had experienced the same thing himself – eleven years earlier he had been forced to hide in Upper Egypt as a result of a doctrinal shift in Rome. So it can be said that ideas about Jesus and his status had been quite fluid up until this point, but that from that moment the atmosphere in Christendom changed dramatically. For it was no longer a matter of sensibly debating this approach over that approach; it was now a matter of being declared already dead (cut off from salvation) by the ruling faction if you persisted in your use of writings considered subversive. In *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, G.R.S. Mead says that the Scriptures eventually turned into a “literary fetish deprived of reason.”<sup>11</sup> The textual God of the Church’s first fundamentalists had appeared, and he was about to stamp his disapproval on everyone and everything out of alignment with his faction’s fancies.

When he published his book in 1960, Mead wrote of Christianity’s origins being imbibed with our mothers’ milk, and of it being an integral part of the consciousness of the Western world. Interwoven with our earliest memories, the sheer solemnity of Christian doctrine had found its way into our heart and minds; that is, it affected us deeply without our realizing it. Even if consciously unconcerned with its ideas and beliefs, we were still strongly influenced by those ideas and beliefs at the unconscious level, and at the social level. For some, this resulted in an unquestioning attitude towards Christianity, a curious inability to shrug off the idea that, somehow, Christianity was probably correct in its pronouncements in spite of much evidence to the contrary. For others, it was a nagging doubt about their rejection of Christianity. This suggested that anyone born within the confines of Christendom had a struggle on their hands if they wished to shake off the claim that today’s Christianity had been in the mind of God before the world came into existence. As Mead points out, Christianity is something we have grown used to, it has become part of us at the cultural level and is backed by the “stupendous power of inertia which force of custom carries.”<sup>12</sup> Hence deathbed conversions and the sudden leap that some people make from unbelief to belief. We’ve been psychologically programmed, and our first act of waking up is to become aware of that disturbing fact.

## **The Lowest Common Denominator**

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, Christian communities tried to develop their ideas through direct experience of God and self, some believing Christianity to be a system of knowledge that could be translated into a world philosophy. The soul could be known in the same way as the body; real Christianity was an exact science of the soul that could be made satisfying to even the most exacting intellect. Given the title “first-born of Satan”, these communities were forced under- ground, the result being an ever-deepening resentment that spread its tentacles in all directions.

Having received the name “Gnostics” because of their insis- tence that *gnosis* (knowledge) was integral to spiritual wisdom, these explorers of inner reality reached conclusions about God, self and world that the Church felt compelled to reject. And they were eventually in a position to make their rejection stick, for by the 4th century previously victimized Christian bishops were in control of Rome’s legal arm, any groups considered heretical defined as criminals and persecuted. So the narrow orthodoxy of the Church became the ruling norm, and Christian teaching was reduced, as Professor Stephan Hoeller puts it, to the lowest common denominator. The Roman “branch”, because of good fortune (Constantine’s beneficence), had taken over and was now able to dictate both the content and direction of the faith. The faith was now Roman, and would soon be Catholic, that is, universally accepted because of power-politics played to the nth degree. Accused by the Roman Church of having created doctrines allied, not to Christ, but to the thinking of Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Orpheus and Heraclitus, the Gnostic communities were categorized as corrupt and dismissed as a universal danger. And this in spite of the fact that their writings made no direct reference to these philosophers at any time.<sup>13</sup>

Successful in terms of it being the centrally positioned controlling Christian faction, the church at Rome worked to accommodate its rapidly growing flock by further simplifying its already simple message of the “Christ”. This resulted in the faith reaching its lowest ebb in spite of previous subtlety. Retreating to the monasteries, gnosis-oriented Christians adapted as best they could to the mental restrictions placed upon them; others withdrew and formed secret congregations, nurturing, in Mead’s words “a hidden life of great activity.”<sup>14</sup> Private libraries of banned books were legion, and schools or workshops were formed where a veritable science of the sacred was developed. The Church was appalled. These gnosis-oriented Christians seemed to be in every thicket, their teachings ever more dangerous to, and distant from, orthodoxy. And nowhere more so than in Egypt, at Alexandria, where the greatest public library in the pagan world was housed. Thus the Alexandrian library was probably the principal source of information on past religious systems for scholars interested in gnosis, and this may well have been the reason for its destruction by fire. Then there were the mystics, those inner travelers to whom the staid doctrines of the ruling faction were merely echoes of things

deeper and richer. And not an undisciplined rabble of subversives as the Church liked to think; more often than not highly disciplined and skilled groups of individuals dedicated to a purpose which the Church had already lost sight of. Yes, there were rogues and vagabonds and charlatans in these communities, and some of them may even have been quite mad, but no more so than many of the orthodox churchmen of the day. They too had their odd beliefs, and could be said without contradiction to have perfected the art of believing some very odd things about Jesus before the close of the 4th century.

### **The Rule of Faith**

In her seminal text *The Gnostic Gospels*, Elaine Pagels pries open the Gnostic world and confronts us with a mentality quite other than the one generally thought to reside there. Revealing what she terms “the other side of the coin”, she draws our attention to the fact that not only did orthodox Christianity denounce the Gnostics, the Gnostics too denounced the orthodox as “unknowingly empty, not knowing who they are, like dumb animals.”<sup>15</sup> Accusing orthodox Christians of having built an “imitation church”, these Gnostics then elaborate fully on their grievances and voice the opinion that the Church at Rome has enslaved its flock through fear and forced it to obey earthly representatives – proving, if nothing else, that they had once belonged to the Christian fold. The Roman Church is also referred to as a counterfeit church that claims exclusive legitimacy, those who lead it described as blind because they speak of things about which they know nothing. This is their principal failing, and out of their arrogance springs the notion of doctrines which cannot be questioned by anyone. Oppressing their flock, the hierarchy of this Church is described as slandering the truth and preaching a false Christ.

Elaine Pagels captures the essence of the problem when she tells us that by the end of the 2nd century orthodoxy had established objective criteria for church membership. She writes: “Whoever confessed the Creed, accepted the ritual of baptism, participated in worship, and obeyed the clergy was accepted as a fellow Christian.”<sup>16</sup> The heart of the Christian faith had been lost, and into the vacuum created had poured manmade doctrines backed by emotional investment. And so there arose confusion in the Christian mind as to who was telling the truth about Jesus, and with the help of a central authority complete with growing police powers, the Church eventually managed to embed her doctrinal creations in the Christian mind.

This interpretation is of course hotly disputed, but modern scholarship has blown the lid off this particular pot, and attempts by some Christian scholars to put that lid back on again have failed. Many of the Gnostic communities had set up qualitative criteria and looked for evidence of spiritual maturity in those claiming



to be Christian. In contrast to this approach, the bishops did away with qualitative criteria and attempted to unify the scattered churches through standardization of doctrine. It was no longer what you experienced in your own depths that mattered; all that mattered was what you believed with your mind, a point clearly agreed with by Cardinal Jean Daniélou in an earlier chapter. And do not try to have the best of both worlds: if you belonged to an orthodox church and were foolish enough to hold a cult meal or baptize someone without the bishop being present, then not only had you separated yourself from the legitimate Church, you had also separated yourself from God.<sup>17</sup>

So the gospels of the Gnostics were banned, and along with the suppression of these gospels went the suppression of those who understood their message. Full of symbols and veiled language concerning interior processes, these gospels were either hidden by initiates so that their insights might survive, or destroyed by those who found those insights incomprehensible and threatening. Classified as apostate, and therefore worse than pagans, the Gnostic Christians were described as evil seducers and hounded from pillar to post. And all because they claimed themselves able to discriminate between what was true and what was false. They did not need to be told what to believe, they said. They did not require the advice of waterless canals (the bishops); neither did they need doctrines that bound the mind to fixed paths of thought. Their Christianity was founded not on beliefs but on relationship, their behavior not on the dictates of authority figures but on the presence of God in their midst. The rule of faith had displaced conscience and made the arbitrary notions of men sacrosanct.

### **Archetypal Energies**

It was the educated Christians who divorced themselves from the Roman Church and set up their own communities. Tertullian complained that it was the cream of his membership who deserted the ship of faith for the ship of understanding. And the word “understanding” should not be interpreted as referring to a desire for knowledge in the intellectual sense – that is a false accusation made against the gnosis-oriented Christians by their bishops. Gnosis was not hard knowledge, it was insight into the things of the spirit. The human mind was backgrounded by archetypal energies, they believed, and the release of those energies automatically cleared perception of its dependence on external forms.

This carries us back to the fact that Jesus was himself a nonconformist in religious terms. So it is no surprise that those who took his basic teachings seriously were also nonconformists, that they could stand neither the restrictions nor the claustrophobia of religious narrow-mindedness. And that is exactly how the Church ended up, as a narrow-minded and altogether pompous institution. Yes, it has modernized its image, but only because it has had no option – the world streaked

away from it and its foolishness became self-evident. The Apostle Paul may have considered the cleverness of the world foolishness, and the foolishness of Christian belief a mark of intelligence, but if he had lived for a few hundred years he would have rapidly changed his mind. For in spite of evidence in the Epistles of Paul to the contrary, I do not think he believed what the Roman Church ended up believing; in fact I think he would have been astonished by Catholic doctrine as it eventually evolved. Paul has been blamed over and over again for writing the Roman Church a blank check, but a careful comparison of the Epistles suggests doctrinal skullduggery right from square one. There is a phantom Paul in the Epistles, and we would do well to study his profiles.

## **Balance**

Moral law strictly adhered to was the outcome of minds struggling to get back to God by a self-conscious route. Jesus rejected this self-conscious route and, as a result deeply angered and infuriated the upholders of Jewish religious orthodoxy. Like Jesus, the Gnostic Christians believed that each person carried a different set of needs, different levels of comprehension, and different qualities of maturity. To feed everyone on the same strict moral diet was to ignore true need and further distort an already distorted self in need of help. Forcing everything into opposition and demanding *this* choice over *that* undermined our ability to act with freedom and love – particularly when we set up *one* of those choices as an unquestionable truth.

Elaine Pagels is at pains to point out that ethical questions are just as real and as important to these Gnostic Christians as they are to their consensus-loving brothers and sisters; the difference is that they have realized that fear” disables our ability to make helpful ethical choices. Connecting this fact to his rejection of cosmic opposites, Philip says, “Do not fear the flesh, nor love it. If you fear it, it will gain mastery over you; if you love it, it will devour and paralyze you.”<sup>18</sup> This is the dilemma facing all of us, the dilemma of how to mentally balance ourselves between our fears and our loves, between our revulsions and our desires, between our projections and what actually exists. To live with the constant restriction of fear is to be mastered by life; to live without any kind of restriction is to be overcome by one’s own appetites. Push the moral question too far and we end up killing people for their own good; refuse to properly recognize the moral question and we end up doing exactly the same thing. And so we come full circle and are confronted with the problem of how to control our unruly emotions. What to do, what to do?

Pagels identifies the Kingdom of God as a state of transformed consciousness, a state of “self discovery”,<sup>19</sup> not some future event we have to wait for. The Kingdom’s appearance has to do with a balancing of psychological forces; it is a

“seeing” that the Gospel of Thomas describes in these carefully chosen words:

When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same . . . then you will enter the kingdom.<sup>20</sup>

Recognizing the significance of events (their *thereness*, and our own *thereness* as they occur) is the key that saves us from the dictates of a submerged conscious mind. Or, as the Gospel of Thomas puts it: “Recognize what is before your eyes, and what is hidden will be revealed to you.”<sup>21</sup> Such statements may seem obscure, but they are quite straightforward if you interpret them in Father Sylvan’s terms. It is a matter of balancing oneself perceptually between *self as the one who sees* with *what is seen by the self*. This is not some mystic state of consciousness; it is a basic perceptual act in which the awake mind sustains its state of being awake through conscious effort – our being *present to ourselves as we perceive either internal or external reality*. The Gnostic teacher Silvanus captures the essence of this when he says: “end the sleep which weighs heavy upon you.”<sup>22</sup> We are mostly submerged, engaged in conscious activity and have to wake up to the basic psychological fact. And not just occasionally; this waking up has to become an ongoing discipline to be effective. Pagels sums up the situation thus:

Such Gnostics acknowledged that pursuing *gnosis* engages each person in a solitary, difficult process, as one struggles against internal resistance. They characterize this resistance to *gnosis* as the desire to sleep or to be drunk – that is, to remain unconscious.<sup>23</sup>

That, I think, helps consolidate the picture I’m trying to build of the submerged self and its problems. We are mostly engaged in conscious interaction with self, other or world, and as a consequence are unconscious while conscious – a flagrant contradiction in psychological terms now recognized and understood by some psychologists and philorophers, but perhaps not yet fully appreciated as to its deeper significance.

### **References and Notes:**

- 1) Sylvan, Father, *Lost Christianity* by Jacob Needleman, Element Books, Wiltshire, England 1990, p 139.
- 2) Ibid, p 211.
- 3) Ibid, p 209.

- 4) Ibid.
- 5) Romans 12: 2
- 6) Sylvan, Father, *Lost Christianity* by Jacob Needleman (as above) p 195.
- 7) Doresse, Jean, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, An introduction to the Gnostic Coptic manuscript discovered at Chenoboskion, 1960. p 48.
- 8) Ibid, p 36.
- 9) Ibid, p 50.
- 10) Petrement, Simone, *A Separate God*, translated by Carol Harrison for Harper SanFrancisco, 1990, p 356.
- 11) Mead, G.R.S., *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, University Books, New York 1960, p 14.
- 12) Ibid, p 29.
- 13) Doresse, Jean, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics*, (as above), p 263.
- 14) Mead, G.R.S., *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, (as above), p 96.
- 15) Pagels, Elaine, *The Gnostic Gospels*, Vintage Press, New York 1981, p 123.
- 16) Ibid, p 126.
- 17) Ibid, p 127.
- 18) Pagels, Elaine, *The Origin of Satan*, p 172. (find text)
- 19) Pagels, Elaine, *The Gnostic Gospels* (as above) pp 154-155.
- 20) Thomas, Gospel of, 37.20-35, in NHL, 119.
- 21) Ibid, 33.11-13, in NHL, 118
- 22) Silvanus, Teachings of, 88.24-92.12, in NHL 349-350.
- 23) Pagels, Elaine, *The Gnostic Gospels*, (as above), p 152.