

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Gnosticism

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GNOSTICISM, nos'ti-siz'm:

- I. GENERAL DEFINITION
- II. SOURCES OF GNOSTICISM
 1. Alexandrian Philosophy
 2. Zoroastrianism
- III. NATURE OF GNOSTICISM
Chief Points
- IV. GNOSTICISM IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
 1. Colossians
 2. 1 Cor: "Knowledge" at Corinth
 3. Pastoral Epistles
 4. 1 John
 - (1) Gnostic Claims
 - (2) Its Loveless Nature
 - (3) Docetism
 - (4) The Antichrist
 - (5) Its Antinomian Side
 5. "To Know the Depths," Rev
- V. THE CHRISTIAN ANTITHESIS
 1. God and the World
How Did the World Originate?
 2. Evil

- (1) Christian Doctrine of Sin
- (2) Sin and the Moral Law
3. Christ and Redemption
4. Asceticism and Antinomianism
- VI. HARNACK'S VIEW OF GNOSTICISM
- VII. INFLUENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF GNOSTICISM
 1. Not a Heresy of the Humbler Classes
 2. Cerinthus: His Teaching
 3. The Gospel of John
 4. Various Sects
 - (1) The Ophites
 - (2) Valentinus
 - (3) Basilides
 - (4) Saturninus
 - (5) Marcion
 5. Relation to the OT
 6. The Christian Verities
 7. Influence on Theology
 8. Truth Underlying Docetism
- VIII. MODERN GNOSTICISM LITERATURE

Gnosticism—except perhaps in 1 Tim 6:20, where St. Paul warns Timothy against “the *gnōsis*, which is falsely so called”—is not directly alluded to in the NT. Nevertheless its leaven was actually working, as will immediately be seen, and constituted a most serious peril in the apostolic church. “That strange, obscure movement, partly intellectual, partly fanatical ... in the 2d cent. spread with the swiftness of an epidemic over the church from Syria to Gaul” (Law, *The Tests of Life*, 26). It is therefore of high importance to gain a right conception of the nature of this potent anti-Christian influence. This is not easy. The difficulty in dealing with Gnosticism is that it was not a homogeneous System of either

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

religion or philosophy, but embraced many widely diversified sects holding opinions drawn from a great variety of sources. “The infinitely varied shapes assumed by the systems render it almost impossible to classify them, or even to give an account of their leading ideas, which shall not be open to objection. We might as well try to classify the products of a tropical jungle, or the shapes and hues of the sunset clouds, which change under our view as we look at them” (Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, 58).

2

I. General Definition.—On the general definition of Gnosticism a few authorities may be cited. “Gnosticism,” says Dr. Gwatkin, “may be provisionally described as a number of schools of philosophy, oriental in general character, but taking in the idea of a redemption through Christ, and further modified in different sects by a third element, which may be Judaism, Hellenism, or Christianity ... the Gnostics took over only the idea of a redemption through Christ, not the full Christian doctrine, for they made it rather a redemption of the philosophers from matter, than a redemption of mankind from sin” (*Early Church History to AD 313*, II, 20).

Dr. Orr writes, “Gnosticism may be described generally as the fantastic product of the blending of certain Christian ideas—particularly that of redemption through Christ—with speculations and imaginings derived from a medley of sources (Gr, Jewish, Parsic; philosophies, religions, theosophies, mysteries) in a period when the human mind was in a kind of ferment, and when opinions of every sort were jumbled together in an unimaginable welter. It involves, as the name denotes, a claim to ‘*knowledge*,’ knowledge of a kind of which the ordinary believer was incapable, and in the possession of which ‘salvation’ in the full sense consisted. This knowledge of which the Gnostic boasted, related to the subjects ordinarily treated of in religious philosophy; Gnosticism was a species of *religious philosophy*” (*The Early Church*, 71).

Neander has described Gnosticism as “the first notable attempt to introduce into Christianity the existing elements of mental culture, and to render it more complete on the hitherto rather neglected side of theoretical knowledge; it was an attempt of the mind of the ancient world in its yearning after knowledge, and in its dissatisfaction with the present, to bring within its grasp and to appropriate the treasures of this kind which Christianity presented” (*Antignostikus*, Intro, 199).

Gnosticism accordingly comprehends in itself many previously existing tendencies; it is an amalgam into which quite a number of different elements have been fused. A heretical system of thought, at once subtle, speculative and elaborate, it endeavored to introduce into Christianity a so-called higher knowledge, which was grounded partly on the philosophic creed in which Greeks and Romans had taken refuge consequent on the gradual decay and breaking-up of their own religions, partly, as will be shown, on the

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

philosophies of Plato and of Philo, and still more on the philosophies and theosophies and religions of the East, especially those of Persia and of India.

“For a long time the pagan beliefs had ceased to be taken seriously by thoughtful men and had been displaced by various creeds derived from philosophical speculation. These in themselves were abstract and unsatisfying, but had been partly vitalized by union with the theosophies of the East. An attempt was made on the part of this philosophical religion to effect an alliance with Christianity. A section of the church was dissatisfied with the simplicity of the gospel, and sought to advance to something higher by adopting the current speculations.... The late books of the NT are all occupied, more or less, with this movement, which was the more dangerous as it threatened the church from within” (Professor E. Scott, *The Apologetic of the NT*, 14).

Gnosticism, though usually regarded as a heresy, was not really such: it was not the perverting of Christian truth; it came, rather, from outside. Having worked its way into the Christian church, it was then heretical. “Although it became a corrupting influence within the church, it was an alien by birth. While the church yet sojourned within the pale of Judaism, it enjoyed immunity from this plague; but as soon as it broke through these narrow bounds, it found itself in a world where the decaying religions and philosophies of the West were in acute fermentation under the influence of a new and powerful leaven from the East; while the infusion of Christianity itself into this fermenting mass only added to the bewildering multiplicity of gnostic sects and systems it brought forth” (Law, *The Tests of Life*, 26).

II. Sources of Gnosticism.—Mansel (in his work on *The Gnostic Heresies*, 32) sums up the principal sources of Gnosticism in these three, Platonism, the Pers religion, and the Buddhism of India. To Platonism it owed much of its philosophical form and tendencies. From the Dualism of the Pers religion it derived its speculations regarding the origin of evil, and much of what it taught about emanations. To Buddhism, he thinks, it owed the doctrine of the antagonism between matter and spirit, and the unreality of derived existence—the germ of Docetism. Mansel also holds that there is the possibility that Gnosticism derived certain of its features from the Kabbala (*kabbālāh*), or secret teaching of the Jews in the two books, the *Šēpher yēçīrāh*, or Book of Creation, and the *Zōhar*, or Book of Light. An influence of Buddhism on Gnosticism, however, may safely be doubted, as there is no reason to believe that the knowledge of Buddhist doctrine had so early penetrated into the West. The Jewish works named by Mansel are really products of the Middle Ages (Westcott, *Intro to the Study of the Gospels*, 144–45). The other sources named

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

were really influential. We notice two—the Alexandrian philosophy and the Parsic dualism.

1. Alexandrian Philosophy

Alexandrian philosophy endeavored to unite Gr philosophy and Heb religion. Philo, the great Jewish commentator of Alexandria, had tried to interpret the ancient Jewish Scriptures by the aid of the Gr philosophy, to expound the OT in terms of Plato's thought and to discover allegorical meanings where none were intended. In Philo's teaching there is a sharp line drawn between God and the material world: with him God cannot exert any action upon the world of matter, except through intermediate agency, the Jewish angels and the heathen demons. Philo has much to say in regard to the Logos. His utterances on this subject may be compared with what is said of the attributes of "Wisdom" in ch 8 of the Book of Prov, and also with the Logos or "Word" of the Gospel of John. With Philo, the Logos is the power of God, or the Divine reason endowed with energy, and embracing within itself all subordinate powers. The Logos is impersonal in its relations to God; and herein is one huge difference between Philo's conception and that in the gospel. Philo teaches that the Logos is the only firstborn of God, the chief of the angels, the viceroy of God, and representative of man. See Logos.

According to Philo the creation of the universe was a gradual molding out of matter; hence arises evil. He also teaches the preëxistence of the soul, which is now imprisoned in the flesh. The wise man, therefore, will break the thralldom of the flesh, and will rise by a sort of ecstasy to the immediate vision of God. It will be seen how much of this teaching was assimilated by the various gnostic sects.

2. Zoroastrianism

The Zoroastrian or Pers system was based on the assumption that there existed two original and independent powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, Ormuzd (Ahura-Mazda), the wise Lord, and Ahriman (Angra-Mainyu), the wicked spirit. These powers were believed to be equal, and each supreme in his own domain. The earth, which was created by Ormuzd, became the battlefield of the two powers. Ahriman led away the first man and woman from their allegiance to Ormuzd, and so all evils result to mankind.

"In oriental (Pers) dualism," says Professor Bousset, "it is within this material world that the good and the evil powers are at war, and this world beneath the stars is by no means conceived as entirely subject to evil. Gnosticism has combined the two, the Gr opposition

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics

between spirit and matter, and the sharp Zoroastrian dualism, which, where the Gr mind conceived of a higher and a lower world, saw instead two hostile worlds standing in contrast to each other like light and darkness. And out of the combination of these two dualisms arose the teaching of Gnosticism with its thoroughgoing pessimism and its fundamental asceticism" ("Gnosticism," in *Enc Brit*, 11th ed, XII, 154).

III. Nature of Gnosticism.—"Gnosticism," says Dr. Gwatkin, "is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation" (*Early Church History*, 73). The intellectual pride of the Gnostics refined away the gospel into a philosophy. The clue to the understanding of Gnosticism is given in the word from which it is derived—*gnōsis*, "knowledge." Gnosticism puts knowledge in the place which can only rightly be occupied by Christian faith. To the Gnostic the great question was not the intensely practical one, "What must I do to be saved from sin?" but "What is the origin of evil?" "How is the primitive order of the universe to be restored?" In the knowledge of these and of similar questions, and in the answers given to these questions, there was redemption, as the Gnostic understood it.

"These little gnostic sects and groups all lived in the conviction that they possessed a secret and mysterious knowledge, in no way accessible to those outside, which was not to be proved or propagated, but believed in by the initiated, and anxiously guarded as a secret. This knowledge of theirs was not based on reflection or scientific inquiry and proof, but on revelation. It was derived directly from the times of primitive Christianity, from the Saviour Himself and His disciples and friends, with whom they claimed to be connected by a secret tradition, or else from later prophets, of whom many sects boasted. It was laid down in wonderful mystic writings, which were in the possession of the various circles.

"In short, Gnosticism in all its various sections, Its form and its character, falls under the category of mystic religions, which were so characteristic of the religious life of decadent antiquity. In Gnosticism, as in the other mystic religions, we find the same contrast of the initiated and the uninitiated, the same loose organization, the same kind of petty sectarianism and mystery-mongering. All alike boast a mystic revelation and a deeply veiled wisdom" (Bousset, *op. cit.*, 153).

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op. cit. in the work quoted

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Chief Points in Gnosticism

The questions, therefore, with which Gnosticism concerned itself were those of the relation of the finite and the infinite, the origin of the world and of evil, the cause, meaning, purpose and destiny of all things, the reason of the difference in the capacities and in the lot in life of individual men, the method of salvation. The following may be regarded as the chief points in the characteristics of the gnostic systems: (1) A claim on the part of the initiated to a special knowledge of the truth, a tendency to regard knowledge as superior to faith, and as the special possession of the more enlightened, for ordinary Christians did not possess this secret and higher doctrine. (2) The essential separation of matter and spirit, the former of these being essentially evil, and the source from which all evil has arisen. (3) An attempt at the solution of the problems of creation and of the origin of evil by the conception of a Demiurge, i.e. a Creator or Artificer of the world as distinct from the Supreme Deity, and also by means of emanations extending between God and the visible universe. It should be observed that this conception merely concealed the difficulties of the problem, and did not solve them. (4) A denial of the true humanity of Christ, a docetic Christology, which looked upon the earthly life of Christ and esp. on His sufferings on the cross as unreal. (5) The denial of the personality of the Supreme God, and the denial also of the free will of man. (6) The teaching, on the one hand, of asceticism as the means of attaining to spiritual communion with God, and, on the other hand, of an indifference which led directly to licentiousness. (7) A syncretistic tendency which combined certain more or less misunderstood Christian doctrines, various elements from oriental and Jewish and other sources. (8) The Scriptures of the OT were ascribed to the Demiurge or inferior Creator of the world, who was the God of the Jews, but not the true God. Some of these characteristic ideas are more obvious in one, and some of them in others of the gnostic systems. The relation of these ideas to Christian facts and doctrines is dealt with more particularly below.

IV. Gnosticism in the Christian Church.—(1) *In the NT and the Apostolic Age.*—The germ of Gnosticism in the Christian church made its appearance in the apostolic age, and is referred to by St. Paul in several of his epistles, notably in that to the Colossians and in the Pastoral Epistles. It is also referred to by the apostles Peter and Jude; references to it are found, besides, in the Apocalypse, the First Epistle of John and the Gospel of John.

1. Colossians

In Col a great deal is said regarding a false teaching, an insidious theosophist doctrine, the teachers of which were alienating the Christians in Colossae from the gospel, and were disseminating their speculations, which led to the worship of angels in contrast to the worship of Christ, to esoteric exclusiveness wholly opposed to the universality of the gospel, and to an asceticism injurious to Christian freedom, and derogatory to the human

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

body as indwelt by the Holy Ghost. These tenets are identical with the more fully developed Gnosticism of the generation succeeding that of the apostles; and at the root of the Colossian false teaching there lay the same error which the gnostic mind had no way of meeting. viz. that there could be no connection between the highest spiritual agency, that is God, and gross corporeal matter.

From this theoretical basis arose another error—that as sin is inherent in the material substance of the body, therefore the only way by which perfection can be reached is to punish the body by asceticism, so that through the Infliction of pain and the mortification of the flesh the region of pure spirit may be reached, and thus man may be etherealized and become like God. This ascetic tendency is wonderfully widespread; it reappears century after century, and shows itself in many forms of religion, not merely in distorted forms of Christianity, but in the Hindu religions, In Buddhism and elsewhere. In the Epistle to the Col, accordingly, there are definite references to ascetic practices which were inculcated by the false teachers at Colossae. The very terms which they employed have been preserved, “Touch not,” “Taste not,” “Handle not.” It was in this way that these teachers had “at their own hand” invented a worship different from that of the Christian faith, which endeavored to attain the deliverance of the soul by “the neglecting of the body” (Col 2:21, 23 AV). These gnostic teachers showed these tendencies still more boldly when Paul wrote his First Epistle to Tim (see below), for he describes them as “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats” (1 Tim 4:3). These ascetic practices were afterward taught by various gnostic sects, the Encratites, the followers of Saturninus, and others.

These tendencies in the Colossian church St. Paul set himself to correct in his epistle. The method which he adopts is not so much to demolish error, as to establish the contrary truth, setting before the Colossians the person and work of Christ, Christ the Creator, Christ in whom there dwells not merely some or even much of the fulness of God, but all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; Christ the God of providence, the Upholder of all things, in whom matter and all creatures and all events “consist” and have their being; Christ the Reconciler who has reconciled us unto God through the blood of the cross. In view of truths like these, Colossian error and all other forms of Gnosticism crumble into decay and vanish. See Colossians, Epistle to the.

2. 1 Cor: “Knowledge” at Corinth

The Epistle to the Col is the first of the Pauline Epistles in which distinctively gnostic teaching is found in its attack upon the Christian faith. But from incidental notices in epistles of Paul written at an earlier period, it can be seen how congenial was the soil into

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which gnostic teaching was about to fall. For even in Corinth when Paul wrote his First Epistle to the church there, there had been a claim on the part of some that they possessed “knowledge,” as if others were destitute of it, a claim which the apostle refuses to admit, and meets with stern resistance. They thought themselves “wise,” they were given to disputing, they professed that they “all had knowledge” (1 Cor 8:1), nay, they could “know all mysteries and all knowledge” (13:2); but this knowledge did not edify them, did not build them up, it only puffed them up (8:1); it did not make them sympathetic or tender-hearted toward the weak (8:7–11).

3. Pastoral Epistles

In 1 Tim 6:20, 21 Paul speaks of the “knowledge [the *gnōsis*] which is falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith.” In other places in that epistle reference is made to tenets which are exactly those of Gnosticism. In 1:4 the apostle speaks of “fables and endless genealogies, which minister questionings, rather than a dispensation of God which is in faith.” Philo had given a great impetus to an allegorizing interpretation of the OT. His writings were well known and were popular in many of the Jewish schools. These fanciful interpretations would hinder the growth of the Christian church; and this allegorizing of Scripture, joined to the teaching of the genealogies of the aeons, would leave no place for a Redeemer. In 4:3, as already noted, Paul describes ascetic practices which were regarded by their votaries as most meritorious. To abstain from marriage and from various kinds of food was the teaching of the Essenes and also of the Gnostics. This ascetic teaching was unnatural, as contrary to the constitution of the world, as that has been arranged by a holy and wise Creator, and it is also subversive of Christian liberty. Nothing can be esteemed common or unclean without throwing a reproach upon the Creator.

Antinomian development.—But another and contrary result also followed from the principles of the sinfulness of matter, and of redemption as deliverance from the flesh, viz. that there was an easier way of relief, by treating the soul and the body as separate entities which have nothing in common. Let the soul go its way on the wings of spiritual thought, while the body may indulge its fleshly desires. For, so it was held, as body and soul are entirely distinct in their nature, the spiritual cannot be defiled by anything, however carnal and gross, that the body can do. This was the antinomian development of Gnosticism. Many traces of this are apparent in the Pastoral Epistles and in 2 Pet and Jude. The Gnostics, against whom Paul warns Timothy, were “lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed-up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:2, 3, 4). Such, too, is the

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

testimony borne regarding them by Ignatius (Law, *The Tests of Life*, 30): “They give no heed to love, caring not for the widow, the orphan or the afflicted, neither for those who are in bonds, nor for those who are released from bonds, neither for the hungry nor the thirsty.” Such persons professed that they knew God, but by their works they denied Him; “abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Tit 1:16). They enticed others into sins of impurity (2 Tim 3:5, 6). They allured others through the lusts of the flesh; and the means by which they succeeded in doing this was that they spoke great swelling words of vanity, and the end was that in their destroying of others they themselves also were surely destroyed (2 Pet 2:12, 18). They were ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ; they gave themselves up to the sins of the flesh, and ran riotously after error in hope of a gain in money; they were sensual men, not having the Spirit (Jude vs 4, 8, 11, 19). The entire Ep. of Jude is directed against this antinomian and licentious development of Gnosticism, and against its terrible permission of an unholy life (see below on Book of Rev).

4. 1 John

In the First Epistle of John there is a distinct polemical purpose. There is no book of the NT which is more purposeful in its attack of error. There is “the spirit of error” (1 Jn 4:6), opposing the Spirit of truth. “Many false prophets are gone out into the world” (4:1), and this from the church itself, “They went out from us, but they were not of us” (2:19); and these false prophets are distinctly named “the antichrist” (2:22) and “the liar” (ib), and “the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 Jn ver 7). This peril, against which the apostle writes, and from which he seeks to defend the church, was Gnosticism, as is proved by what is said again and again in the epistle of the characteristics of this insidious and deadly teaching.

(1) *Gnostic claims.*—The gnostic claim to knowledge throws light upon many passages in this epistle. St. John refers to his opponents’ using such phrases as “I know God,” “I abide in Christ,” “I am in the light.” These lofty claims were made by persons who did not love their brethren on earth, who did not walk in Christ’s footsteps, and who were destitute of love. The apostle therefore describes these lofty claims as false, because those who made them possessed neither love nor obedience.

In contrast to these gnostic claims—for those who made them were no other than the early Gnostics—St. John shows how the Christ of history is the Christ of experience: for those to whom he is writing know Christ, who is from the beginning, and they know the

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Father. "We know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God. and eternal life" (5:20). This knowledge of God and communion with Him are attained, not by gnostic speculation, but by the obedience of faith, the outcome of which is brotherly love and a life in which the Christian walks even as Christ did (2:6). And thus also obedience and brotherly love are the test of the profession which any man may make that he knows God. "Every one also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him" (2:29); "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (3:10).

(2) *Its loveless nature.*—Gnosticism was distinguished by an unethical, loveless intellectualism. This seems to be the explanation of the false teaching against which this epistle is directed. The apostle describes the dry head-knowledge which left the heart and life untouched by love, and which led men, while they professed to love God, nevertheless to remain destitute of love to their fellow-men. They did not fold their human brethren to their hearts, they were dead to the fact that where pity dwells, the love of God dwells also. In Gnosticism knowledge was in itself the supreme end and purpose of life, the sum of highest good to which a man could attain, the crown of life. The system was loveless to the core.

(3) *Docetism.*—Now, when the attempt was made to amalgamate these gnostic ideas with the Christian faith, the inevitable result was Docetism. Just because God cannot have any immediate contact with matter, therefore the incarnation of Almighty God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is inconceivable. From this position it is, of course, only a step to deny that the incarnation and the true human life of Christ ever took place at all.

(4) *The Antichrist.*—The Antichrist of the First Epistle of John is docetic Gnosticism. The soul of the apostle rushes onward, with glowing zeal for the honor of his Master whom Gnosticism dishonored, to identify personally the historical Jesus with the Divine Being, "the Son of God," "the Word of Life," "the Christ." "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (2:22, 23). It should be noted that the last clause in ver 23, which is printed in italics in AV, is restored in RV to its rightful position in the original text. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (4:2, 3).

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

(5) *Its antinomian side.*—The antinomian side of Gnosticism is not so directly referred to in the First Epistle of John as Docetism is; but evidences are manifest that the apostle had it clearly before him. “Little children,” he writes, “let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil” (3:7, 8). And these were the methods by which those deceivers endeavored to lead the members of the church astray. They alleged that sin was a thing indifferent in itself. It made no difference to the spiritual man whether he sinned with his body or not. It is for this reason that the apostle, in opposing those teachers, insists that “sin is lawlessness” (3:4); “All unrighteousness is sin” (5:17); “Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin” (3:9); “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (3:10). The whole passage presupposes, as familiar to its readers, a doctrine of moral indifferentism, according to which the status of the ‘spiritual’ man is not to be tested by the commonplace facts of moral conduct” (*The Tests of Life*, 34). See John, First Epistle of.

5. “To Know the Depths”: Rev

As time advanced, and the later books of the NT were written, Gnosticism assumed more of its distinctive peculiarities. “Those who had knowledge” regarded themselves as a superior order of believers. One of their phrases was “to know the depths” (Rev 2:24 AV), and this was valued far more highly than love and obedience. “From this language, we may, I think, infer the existence of an Ophite sect, boasting of its peculiar *gnōsis*, before the date of the Apocalypse” (Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies*, 105). The claim of the Ophites was that they alone knew “the depths.” “Yes,” is the apostle’s reply to claims of this kind, “yes, the depths, but not of God, the depths of Satan”; for such is a just description of a teaching which ascribed the origin and the working of evil to God. It is in the light of gnostic teaching of this sort that the meaning can be seen of the same apostle’s language in his First Epistle, “And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 Jn 1:5).

The Nicolaitans.—In the Epistles to the Seven Churches in the Apocalypse there are other references to Gnosticism. Who the Nicolaitans were (2:6, 15) is not absolutely certain; but it is not unlikely that they were so called because of their having assumed the name of “Nicolaüs, a proselyte of Antioch” (Acts 6:5). The first step to the reception of gentile believers into the Christian church on an equal footing with the Jews may have been the appointment of Nicolaüs as one of the first deacons, for the facts that he was a native of Antioch and a proselyte, show that he had been a heathen by birth. And it is noteworthy to find such a person appointed to office in the church at so very early a period, even

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before the conversion of the apostle Paul. The Nicolaitans therefore may have distorted in an antinomian sense the doctrine taught by Nicolaüs, who in all probability proclaimed the liberty of the gospel, as his fellow-deacon, Stephen, did (Acts 7 throughout). But the liberty claimed by the Nicolaitans was liberty to sin. They are mentioned in the Epistle to Ephesus, and their deeds are characterized as deeds which Christ hates (Rev 2:6). Their name occurs again in the Epistle to Pergamum, and there also their doctrine is described as a doctrine which the Lord hates (ver 15). Their teaching was one of licentiousness—eating things sacrificed to idols, and committing fornication (ver 14). Again in the Epistle to Thyatira, the Gnostics are spoken of as practising the same evil courses, and as holding a doctrine of “the depths of Satan” (vs 20, 21, 24 AV)—see above. The persons mentioned in the Epistle to Philadelphia were also evidently Gnostics. They are described as being “of the synagogue of Satan” (3:9).

“In the language of St. Jude, as in that of St. Peter, which it closely imitates, we may clearly discern a reference to the gnostic sect of the Nicolaitans mentioned by name in Rev. The comparison in all these passages, of the error condemned with that of Balaam, is decisive as to the identity of the persons intended. The other characteristics noted by St. Peter are also repeated by St. Jude—their denial of the Lord, their profligate lives, their contempt of government, and evil speaking of dignities and of things that they know not, their pollution of the feasts of charity, their great swelling words. The antinomian, no less than the ascetic side of Gnosticism, seems by this time to have fully manifested itself” (Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies*, 71).

V. The Christian Antithesis.—The principal points of contrast between Gnosticism and Christian teaching in regard to leading doctrines will now be apparent, and can be briefly summarized.

1. God and the World

According to the Gnostics, God is thought of as the ultimate, nameless, unknowable Being, of whom they speak as the “Abyss.” He is perfect, but the material world is alien to the Divine nature. How then does it come to exist at all? What is the source of its imperfections and evils?

How did the world originate?—The Gnostic answer is that the *plérōma* or fulness of the Deity (see Fulness) could flow out in no other way than in emanations or aeons or angels, all of which are necessarily imperfect, the highest of these emanations or aeons or angels being more spiritual than the grade immediately below it. Of these aeons there is a gradation so numerous, that at length the lowest of them is almost wholly corporeal, the spiritual

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

element having been gradually diminished or eliminated, until at last the world of man and of matter is reached, the abode of evil. In this way the gulf is bridged between God and the world of mankind. The highest aeons approximate closely to the Divine nature, so spiritual are they and so nearly free from matter. These form the highest hierarchy of angels, and these as well as many other grades of the angelic host are to be worshipped.

In opposition to this view, Christian faith worships God as the free self-sufficient Creator, infinitely good and wise and powerful and holy, the Author of all things, and affirms creation as an incomprehensible fact revealed to faith, and which rises above the grasp of the understanding. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (He 11:3, AV).

2. Evil

The doctrine of evil follows directly from the above account of the relation of God to the world. According to Gnosticism the manifestation of God is possible only through self-limitation on His part, for in His essence God is the unfathomable Abyss. Through this Divine self-limitation are evolved, first, the Divine powers or attributes, which previously were hidden in the Abyss of His being. These Divine powers (the *plērōma*) become the principles of all further developments of life. Life continues to be unfolded in such a way that its successive grades sink farther and farther from the purity of God, the life is feebler the nearer they come to matter, with which, at length, they blend. Such, according to Gnosticism, is the origin of evil.

Whenever men are not content with acknowledging evil to be the act of their own free will, which has chosen to forsake its absolute dependence upon God; whenever they go beyond this and seek for another origin of evil, then one of two results follows. They either limit the holiness of God, and find the cause of evil in God Himself, thus annihilating all distinction between good and evil—which is Pantheism; or they limit the power of God by granting the existence of an eternal evil power beyond the control of God—which is Dualism. In avoiding Pantheism, Gnosticism accepted the dualistic solution, ascribing to evil an eternal self-subsistent nature, which is to make it absolute as God Himself is. As absolute self-subsistence can be affirmed of none but God, the eternally self-subsistent evil of Dualism must be God, which it cannot possibly be, because it is not good. Here is the self-contradiction on which Gnosticism was wrecked.

(1) *The Christian doctrine of sin.*—Directly contrary to this is the Christian doctrine, according to which evil is the refusal of the creature-will to lean absolutely and utterly

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics

on God, upon His care and love and upholding grace. Sin is that which ought not to be; it has no right to exist at all; it is defiance of God; it is moral transgression; its magnitude cannot be exaggerated. If it could, it would dethrone God. It has defied His righteousness and wisdom and holiness and even His grace. Sin therefore is dealt with by God in two ways, either by direct punishment or by redemption, in which provision is made for its removal by its being borne by the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

The gnostic idea of the origin of evil follows at once from, and is inseparably involved in, their dualistic interpretation of nature. The question "What is sin?" is no mere academic or philosophical discussion, in which one opinion may be as good as another. "Everything in Christianity is connected more or less directly with the great facts of Sin and Redemption; and the plan of Redemption, which is the essence of Christianity, cannot be rightly understood until the doctrine of Sin be adequately recognized and established. Here, certainly, if anywhere, Christian theology must fight *pro aris et focis*" (Julius Müller, quoted in Dr. Orr's *Sin as a Problem of Today*, 6).

(2) *Sin and the moral law.*—The universality of sin, its persistence, its gravity, its power to destroy and to deprave—these are facts which can hardly be exaggerated. To view sin aright, it is impossible to leave out of sight its relation to moral law, to God, and to His kingdom. Sin is the transgression of moral law; it is transgression also against a holy God, of whose character and will moral law is a transcript or reflection. "Sin is transgression against God, the substitution of the creature-will for the will of the Creator; revolt of the creature-will from God" (*Sin as a Problem of Today*, 7). It is the resolve of the will to make itself independent of God and to renounce His authority. Sin is self-will, false independence, freedom which ends in bondage and misery.

But in Gnosticism sin is something quite different; it is not the act and the disposition of the human will in rebellion against God; it is only a physical fact or quality inherent in the body and in matter everywhere. Redemption therefore does not consist in the work of Christ for us on the cross, and the applying of the benefits of that work by the Holy

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Spirit of God in the renewal of the moral nature of man. Redemption is simply each man's efforts to secure emancipation from the flesh—from physical evil.

3. Christ and Redemption

It is easily seen that a system of this kind had no need of Christ and leaves no place for redemption in the Christian sense of that term. Redemption in this scheme of thought is not deliverance from sin, it is not removal of guilt and renewing of the mind. It is something quite different, and consists in the restoration of the cosmic order and illumination of the mind of the select few through knowledge. Christ is not the Saviour who saves His people from their sins, and who gives them unceasingly, through union with Himself, deliverance from the power of sin. He is only one of the aeons, the highest of them. He is an originated being, and not God. There is thus no place in Gnosticism either for the creation of the universe by God, or for the incarnation and work of Christ. Once grant that matter is essentially evil, and there is excluded the possibility of Christ's having assumed a true human nature, simply for the one reason that the world and human nature are originally and necessarily evil. Thus, as already seen, we are landed in Docetism.

The Christology of the Gnostics accordingly assumed one of two types. "One class of early Gnostics separated the spiritual being Christ from the man Jesus; they supposed that the Christ entered Jesus at the time of His baptism, and left Him at the moment of His crucifixion. Thus the Christ was neither born as a man nor suffered as a man. In this way they obviated the difficulty, insuperable to the gnostic mind, of conceiving the connection between the highest spiritual agency and gross corporeal matter, which was involved in the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and Passion, and which Gnostics of another type more effectually set aside by the doctrine of Docetism, i.e. by assuming that the human body of Our Lord was only a phantom body, and not real flesh and blood. Irenaeus represents the former class as teaching that 'Jesus was the receptacle of the Christ,' and that the Christ 'descended upon Him from heaven in the form of a dove, and after He had declared to mankind the nameless Father, entered again into the *plērōma* imperceptibly and invisibly.' Here no names are given. But in another passage he ascribes precisely the same doctrine, without however naming the *plērōma*, to Cerinthus" (Lightfoot, *Col*, 264). How strenuously this doctrine was combated in apostolic circles has already been shown in speaking of St. John's First Epistle.

4. Asceticism and Antinomianism

The necessary consequence of the gnostic theory in an ascetic morality which passed over by sure steps into antinomian license has likewise been fully illustrated in the foregoing, and need not be further enlarged on. The whole has its root in a false intellectualism, to

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

which the gospel in its inculcation of humility, faith and dependence upon God's Spirit for guidance into truth is, in its inmost principle, opposed.

VI. Harnack's View of Gnosticism.—Harnack's view of Gnosticism differs from that now given in laying the chief emphasis on its Judaeo-Hellenistic side. He describes well how, when Christianity appeared, an extensive spiritualizing or allegorizing of the OT had already taken place. "This spiritualizing was the result of a philosophic view of religion, and this philosophic view was the outcome of a lasting influence of Gr philosophy, and of the Gr spirit generally, upon Judaism. In consequence of this view, all facts and sayings of the OT in which one could not find his way, were allegorized. Nothing was what it seemed, but was only the symbol of something invisible. The history of the OT was here sublimated to a history of the emancipation of reason from passion" (*History of Dogma*, I, 223). This allegorical interpretation disclosed to the mature mind a wealth of relations, of hints and of intuitions from the OT, which to the uninitiated was only a dry record of fact. This view of the OT gave its readers a strange interest, which proceeded to transfer their ancient Jewish hopes into the world of Gr philosophy, and transformed the result into a metaphysic. When these thinkers entered the Christian church, Christian hopes and terms were added to the already existing Jndaic-Gr-Alexandrian compound, and such was Gnosticism. It represented the acute secularizing or Hellenizing of Christianity. The Gnostics "are therefore those Christians, who, in a swift advance, attempted to capture Christianity for Hellenic culture, and Hellenic culture for Christianity, and who gave up the OT in order to facilitate the conclusion of the covenant between the two powers and make it possible to assert the absoluteness of Christianity" (p. 227).

Harnack indeed grants that there were other elements in Gnosticism, but he strongly asserts that the Gr element was the predominating one. In this he seems to us to be in error. Laying the chief emphasis on Hellenism, he fails to give the due and preponderating place to eastern dualism. As already seen, an eastern dualistic theosophy is the chief element in Gnosticism. This eastern source is also acknowledged by Harnack, but only as if it were subsidiary to Hellenism. As he regards it, "Gnosticism was an acute Hellenizing of Christianity" (p. 230).

In regard to the fundamental philosophic doctrines of Gnosticism, the indefinable nature of the Divine primeval Being, the sinfulness of matter, the fulness of God in aeons, the Demiurge, etc, Harnack agrees generally with other writers, and adds, "All these are ideas for which we find the way prepared in the philosophy of the time, anticipated by Philo, and represented in neo-Platonism as the great final result of Gr philosophy" (p. 233).

VII. Influence and Development of Gnosticism.—Gnosticism is peculiarly the heresy of the 2d cent., and in itself a proof of the extent to which a knowledge of the Christian faith

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

had, at that early period, penetrated in literary and philosophical circles. Though it is true that Christianity at first influenced chiefly the humbler classes, yet it was not among these persons that the various gnostic heresies arose.

1. Gnosticism Not a Heresy of the Humber Classes

Gnosticism “was a product which did not spring up spontaneously in the minds of the mechanics and slaves and women and children, whom most, like Celsus, suppose to have formed the bulk of the Christian communities, but could only have taken, its rise in minds of a more cultured and speculative cast. This, indeed, was its claim—to be a religion of ‘*gnōsis*’ or knowledge, for the more highly trained or *élite*. It could only exist at all, therefore, as the result of a Christian ferment which had entered these speculative circles, and was there powerfully at work. Baur rightly appreciates the situation, when he says: ‘Gnosticism gives the clearest proof that Christianity had now come to be one of the most important factors in the history of the time, and it shows esp. what a mighty power of attraction the new Christian principles possessed for the highest intellectual life then to be found either in the pagan or in the Jewish world.’ Above all, these systems are a striking witness to the impression produced on the heathen mind by the great Christian idea of redemption. ‘When the gnostic systems,’ says Neander, ‘describe the movement which was produced in the kingdom of the Demiurge by the appearance of Christ as the manifestation of a new and mighty principle which had entered the precincts of this lower world, they give us to understand how powerful was the impression which the contemplation of the life of Christ and His influence on humanity, had left on the minds of the founders of these systems, making all earlier institutions seem to them as nothing in comparison with Christianity.’ We must beware, therefore, of underestimating either the extent or the intensity of this great intellectual ferment set up by the gospel in the heart of heathenism” (Orr, *Neglected Factors*, etc, 196).

2. Cerinthus: His Teaching

The earliest of the Gnostics known to us by name is Cerinthus, the antagonist of the apostle John. It seems to be beyond reasonable doubt that these two encountered each other at Ephesus. Irenaeus relates on the authority of those who heard the story from Polycarp how the apostle and Cerinthus met in the public baths in that city. When St. John discovered that Cerinthus was in the same building with him, he instantly left, exclaiming that he could not remain while Cerinthus, the enemy of God and of man, was there. From the accounts which have been preserved of Cerinthus and of his teaching, it can be gathered that he taught that the world was created not by the Supreme God, but by an inferior power, and that he also taught a docetic theory of the Incarnation. Caius of Rome, a disciple of Irenaeus, records that Cerinthus held that there would be a

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

millennium of unrestrained sensuality. Dionysius of Alexandria (c 260 AD) more than confirms this. "Thus so far as they go, the historical data harmonize with the internal evidence of the Epistle [of John] itself, in giving the impression that the different tendencies it combats are such as were naturally combined in one consistently developed gnostic system, and that the object of its polemic is, throughout, one and the same" (*The Tests of Life*, 37).

As regards the Gospel of John there is the testimony of Irenaeus, that it was written to oppose that form of Gnosticism which was taught by Cerinthus, and, before him, by the Nicolaitans. The nature of that heresy may be stated in the words of Irenaeus himself:

"A certain Cerinthus," he says, "in Asia, taught that the world was not made by the Supreme God, but by some power altogether separate and distinct from that Sovereign Power which is over the universe, and one ignorant of the God who is over all things. He taught, moreover, that Jesus was not born of a virgin (for this seemed to him to be impossible), but was the son of Joseph and Mary, born after the manner of other men; though preeminent above other men in justice and prudence and wisdom; and that after His baptism the Christ, in the form of a dove, descended upon Him from that Sovereign Power which is over all things; and that He then announced the unknown Father and wrought miracles; but that, at the end, the Christ departed again from Jesus, and that Jesus suffered and was raised from the dead, while the Christ continued impassible, as a spiritual being" (Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies*, 74).

3. The Gospel of John

Such a passage as Jn 19:34, 35 seems to refer to docetic Gnosticism, and to be a personal protest against it. After describing the piercing of Christ's side by the soldier's spear, and how "straightway there came out blood and water," the apostle adds, "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe." There are many other passages which seem to be directed against Docetism, e.g. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory)" (1:14); "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well" (4:6); "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (20:27).

Cerinthus seems to have taught that the religion of Christ was identical with undiluted Mosaism, including even circumcision and the earthly kingdom of the future. The Cerinthian theory, however, was held under various forms by its adherents, some teachers holding that the God of the OT was, at the best, a subordinate angel of limited

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

power, wisdom and goodness, and that the creation of the world was very imperfect. Others went so far as to identify the God of the OT with Satan. The ethic of systems such as these was antinomian, sometimes even going the length of libertinism.

4. Various Sects

Generally, the forms under which Gnosticism appeared varied greatly in different periods. Some went farther than others from the Christian faith. Some communities, such as the Encratites, laid the greatest stress on the necessity for asceticism; other communities were wholly docetic; the Carpocratians taught the philosophy and communism of Plato. One of these teachers, Epiphanes, was honored as a god, and this sect crowned the image of Jesus along with those of Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle. Further, there were impostors of all varieties: magicians, soothsayers, jugglers, deceivers and hypocrites, “who appeared using mighty words with a host of unintelligible formulae and taking up with scandalous ceremonies in order to rob men of their money” (Harnack, *op. cit.*, 239), and even for viler purposes.

(1) *The Ophites*.—Gnosticism, before reaching its full development, is chiefly represented by the ophite sects or systems. These were so named from the word *óphis*, “serpent,” to which they paid honor as the symbol of intelligence. They held that the Creator of the world was an ignorant and imperfect being, Ialdabaoth, the Son of Chaos; and that it was a meritorious act when the serpent persuaded Adam and Eve to disobey him. There were several of the ophite sects, such as the Cainites, who reversed all the standards of moral judgment, choosing as their heroes the persons whom the Bible condemned, such as Cain, the men of Sodom, Esau and Korah.

(2) *Valentinus*.—By the time of Justin Martyr (c 150 AD), Gnosticism had become divided into a variety of sects and schools, Valentinians, Basilideans, Saturninians and Marcionites. In the Valentinian system, Christ and the Holy Spirit were two aeons. The Valentinians granted that ordinary Christians were better than the heathen, and that they might look forward to a kind of salvation; even now ordinary Christians occupied a middle position, better than the “hylic” or “psychic,” but inferior to the “pneumatic” or “spiritual,” as the Gnostics termed themselves.

(3) *Basilides*.—The Basilideans take their name from Basilides of Alexandria, a man of powerful intellect. He and his son Isidore taught this system, which was afterward considerably modified for the purpose of popular apprehension. The world is continuously evolved from a *pansperma* or “seed of the world,” in which all things were

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

originally potentially contained. It is ruled by two great Archons, who yet subserve the designs of the Supreme. There are no aeons, but the highest "light" descends through the successive spheres till it rests on Jesus of Nazareth. The process is complete when the Divine element ("sonship") is all drawn out and restored to God; oblivion then falls on lower intelligences. Many fine sayings are attributed to Basilides, e.g. "I will say anything rather than doubt the goodness of Providence" (Orr, *The Early Church*, 75).

(4) *Saturninus*.—The Saturninians were so called from Saturninus, said to be a disciple of Menander, who in turn is said to have been a disciple of Simon Magus. The system of Saturninus is marked both by a strong dualism and by a gloomy asceticism. He is also reported to have been one of the founders of the Encratite heresy, which condemned marriage. Tatian, Justin Martyr's disciple, became a member of this gnostic sect, holding, it is alleged, the usual theory of aeons, and that there was a Demiurge, who was not the Supreme God.

(5) *Marcion*.—Marcion, a native of Pontus, taught in Rome c 140–55 AD. His system differs much from ordinary gnostic theories, except that he absolutely distinguished between the God of the OT, who is regarded as merely great, harsh, rigorous, and the good God of the NT, who is wholly love. He also held to the usual gnostic dualism and docetism. Marcion's system has been described as an overstrained Paulinism, as he lays the stress on faith, not on knowledge. Marcion was the author of a book called the *Anthitheses*, which contrasted the OT with the NT. He also drew up a canon of Scripture, which contained only one gospel, viz. Lk in a mutilated state, and ten Epp. of Paul. Marcion was a rigorous ascetic. In the Lord's Supper he allowed only water to be used instead of wine. The Marcionites refused baptism to married persons. This sect or "church" endured for several centuries.

5. Relation to the OT

"All the gnostic systems had one feature in common, viz. that they regarded the OT and the NT as revelations of two different Gods, and considered the mission of Christ to proceed from a higher power than the God of the Jewish religion, who was identified with the Demiurge, or Maker of the world. But under this common assumption there was room for two very opposite estimates of the older revelation and of the God whom it reveals. Some of the gnostic sects regarded the Demiurge as being altogether alien from and opposed to the Supreme God; others considered him merely as a subordinate power, inferior but not hostile to the Supreme God, and acting before the coming of a more perfect revelation, as his unconscious organ" (Mansel, *The Gnostic Heresies*, 45). "There can be no doubt that the gnostic propaganda was seriously hindered by the inability to

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Lion and Lamb Apologetics

organize and discipline churches, which is characteristic of all philosophic systems of religion” (Harnack, *History of Dogma*, I, 252). “From about 210 they ceased to be a factor of the historical development, though the church of Constantine and Theodosius was alone really able to suppress them” (Ibid., 251).

6. The Christian Verities

In contrast to Gnosticism the Christian church held fast to these great facts, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, preexistent before the Incarnation, and manifest in the flesh and crucified for us men and for our salvation; that He rose from the dead; that the Old Testament is a true revelation of the one supreme and holy God, the Creator of all things. Dualism, the eternity of matter and its inherent evil, as well as Docetism and oriental mythologies were accordingly rejected as contrary to the Christian faith.

7. Influence on Theology

In contrast to Gnosticism the Christian church held fast to these great facts, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, preexistent before the Incarnation, and manifest in the flesh and crucified for us men and for our salvation; that He rose from the dead; that the OT is a true revelation of the one supreme and holy God, the Creator of all things. Dualism, the eternity of matter and its inherent evil, as well as Docetism and oriental mythologies were accordingly rejected as contrary to the Christian faith. During the period of the prevalence of Gnosticism there took place the earlier developments of Christian theology. Gnosticism gave a powerful impetus to the formation of a NT canon of Scripture, and to the shaping of the earliest creed. See Apostles’ Creed.

8. Truth Underlying Docetism

In the revulsion from Gnosticism and Docetism it should not be forgotten that there is truth to be found even amid the errors of these systems. Docetism was an over-statement of a great truth, an over-statement so large as to destroy the true humanity of Our Lord. But the truth in Docetism is that the eternal Christ touches and appeals to and has a definite relationship to and actually influences every human heart; and also, that, to the Christian believer, Christ is more and does more than this; Christ dwells in the believer’s heart by faith, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27). “Docetism was not all folly. Rather we may regard it as one primitive form of the assertion of that mystical element which has never been wanting to Christianity from the first days until now, and we may be sure, never will be wanting to it” (Sanday, *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, 9).

VIII. Modern Gnosticism.—Gnosticism in its ancient form has passed away, but it is interesting to observe how its spirit reappears from time to time in modern days.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Gnosticism, as already seen, is not one aspect of thought alone, but many. And in one form or another it is seen again and again. For example, the modern denial of the virgin birth of Our Lord is that form of Gnosticism which taught that the man Jesus became Christ only at His baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon Him from heaven.

Phases of gnostic teaching are reproduced in modern pantheistic philosophies and other forms of religious doctrine, which hold that there has been no objective atonement and no resurrection of Christ from the dead. "Basilides with his powerful speculative grasp and all-embracing evolutionary process might be termed the Hegel of the movement; Valentinus with his robe of fantasy and triple fall and redemption was its Schelling; Marcion with his severe practical bent, his doctrine of faith, and his antitheses of the just God and the good, might without straining be termed its Ritschl" (Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*, 59).

"Fichte said, 'There were no external realities at all, they were the mere objectivity of the subject or creations of the inward eye'; after Fichte came Schelling, and Schelling said, 'Then this creating eye is God's own eye'; and after Schelling came Hegel, and Hegel said that 'God and man are one, and God all men, and all men God, and the whole universe God eternally thinking in the process of development,' and that or something like it is Hegelianism. I feel in studying this philosophy, as Baron Humboldt says he felt, when he experienced the first shock of an earthquake. I feel a dreadful sense of restlessness and insecurity. The ground seems to give way beneath, and the earth and the heaven to dissolve, the universe becomes a dream, a myth" (W. B. Robertson, D.D., *Martin Luther, German Student Life*, etc, 138).

"Philosophy," says Mansel, "striving after a first principle which shall be one and simple and unconditioned and incapable of all further analysis in thought, is naturally tempted to soar above that complex combination of attributes which is implied in our conception of personality, and in endeavoring to simplify and purify our representation of the Divine nature, ends by depriving it of every attribute which can make God the object of any religious feeling or the source of any moral obligation" (*The Gnostic Heresies*, 11). God is no longer the author and source of goodness and truth and moral law, but the mind is occupied with the metaphysical relation between God and the world, as absolute and relative, cause and effect, principle and consequence, and God becomes identical with the world.

It is easily seen how teaching of this sort strikes at the root of all religion and morality. The personality of God, the personality and free will of man, the existence of moral evil, the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redemption which He accomplished for the world, His resurrection, the whole significance of His person and His work—all is denied. This is the spirit and the meaning of Gnosticism.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Dr. Gwatkin sums up the matter thus: "Gnosticism undermined Christian monotheism by its distinction of the Creator from the Supreme, Christian morals by its opposition of the philosopher to the unlearned, Christian practice by its separation of knowledge from action; and it cut away the very basis of the gospel whenever it explained away its history. In every case it had got hold of truth on one side—the reality of evil in the world, the function of knowledge in religion, the difference between the letter and the spirit; but fragments of truth are not enough for a gospel, which is false if all truth is not summed up in Christ. Therefore there could be no peace between the gnostic *illuminati* and the Christian churches" (*Early Church History*, II, 68).

23

Literature.—Uhlhorn, *The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*; Neander, *Church History, Antignostikus*; Reuss, *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic* ¹

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¹ Rutherford, J. (1915). "Gnosticism." In J. Orr, J. L. Nuelsen, E. Y. Mullins, & M. O. Evans (Eds.), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Vols. 1–5, pp. 1240–1248). The Howard-Severance Company. Public Domain.