

GNOSIS

Preface

Christian Gnostics do not entertain any idea of "progress". A Spiritual Principle is journeying through time and matter without its destiny necessarily being intertwined with them. In this way, we pre-empt the disillusion which we are heirs-to. This Spiritual Principle, which we Gnostics call "gnosis", seems at first sight to be identical to some suitably vague "Spirit" which is present in equal measure in all humankind. In this view, revelation is simply a matter of furnishing human beings with an authoritative statement of the truth accessible to reason, thereby eliciting an awareness of the Spiritual Principle within them as the necessary preamble to its needs and aspirations coming to expression in worship and philanthropic endeavour. But true Gnostics do not believe that the "gnosis" - an inherent "knowledge" or "insight" into the true nature of the reality which transcends the cosmos - is present in all human beings. By an accident of nature which Gnostics have been willing to express in one way or another in mythological terms, only a limited number of human beings share the "gnosis". In other words, Gnostics are sustained by an élitism wholly foreign to current religious sensibilities and unpalatable to modern apologists of "gnosticism". Because those who share the Knowledge did not obtain it by subscribing to a set of beliefs, it must be said that there is no such phenomenon as "gnosticism", to the extent that Truth is not an "ism" at all.

Hence, if a person can answer "Yes" to the question, "Were you with me before the beginning?" then they are "Gnostic" - by nature rather than by belief. Those who are Gnostic are able to perceive in their own human life the cosmic drama of Sophia's repentance and the reciprocal descent of the Gnosis. As Gnostics, our quest is to find and gather all those in the physical body who can affirm this Truth. The Truth is, however, obscured by the demands of the Powers that emanate from Ialdabaoth, namely, Gender, Race, Class, Sexual Preference, Wealth, Family and Territory. Every religious system which has hitherto been known to humankind has been corrupted by these; only the Gnosis in its pure form transcends them. The Gnostic is therefore indifferent to the acquiescence or non-acquiescence of non-Gnostics. Indeed, the Truth may find itself entombed in the pyramid of a religious system, quietly but confidently awaiting its resurrection into the light of day.

The moral character of the demiurge is far inferior to that of his supposed creatures. And as for that Creation, with infinite power could we not have done a better job ourselves? Hemmed in as we are on all sides by the iron laws of Nature, it is the knowledge of this Truth in the heart of our hearts which will set us free - and the conviction that we belong to something that transcends all of this. Such is our consolation.

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THE SECRET BOOK OF PHILLIP ALL REVEALED

PROLOGUE

One day I, Phillip, turned away from the Temple to a rugged waste, grieving greatly in my heart. While I was contemplating, behold, the heavens opened, and the whole creation below shone with light, and the entire world was shaken, and I was afraid. I looked, and behold, I saw in the light a child standing there. As I looked, it changed its appearance into that of an old man. Then its appearance changed again - returning to that of a child. As I gazed upon it, I did not comprehend this marvellous thing. There was a plurality before me, but within the light there was a multiform image: the semblances appeared through each other, and the likeness had three forms, and it spoke to me.

"Why wonder, Phillip? Why are you afraid? I am 'I am' until the end of time, the Father and the Mother, and the Son begotten, pure, and forever undefiled. I have come now to teach you what is, what was, and what will come to pass, so that you may know the things which are not manifest and those that are: to teach you all about the race which is not prone to change or to decay. Lift up your face, therefore, and hearken to the things I shall disclose to you today, so that you may pass them on to kindred souls sprung from the steadfast race of Perfect Man.

"The One is one. There is no other one who can be God or Father of the All. Unseen - beyond all sight - and pure - beyond whatever can decay or be corrupt. Think not 'divine', since He is more than 'God'; supreme above whatever is, this Spirit needs no other lesser one, for all that now exists exists in Him. Since He does not exist in time, He needs no life that throbs with temporality. He does not strive to overcome a lack, since He lacks nothing, perfect in His light. For, limitless, who ever could limit Him? Unsearchable, who could aspire to search or measure one who is immeasurable? Invisible, since none has gazed on Him, He is eternal, since He always was. Ineffable, since none has read His mind, He is unnamed, beyond all register, His light unguaged, His state immaculate. He is ineffable, entirely pure. He is not Perfection, nor Blessedness, nor yet Divinity - superior to all such qualities. He is not limited - what limit could extend so far? - He is above all these. He is not physical - what body could enclose Him? Dimensions cannot bound Him. None should ever ask, 'What is His quantity?' nor should enquire, 'What is His quality?' to comprehend His kind. Not one among a type, He is alone, unique, without a peer. For Him the ages do not run, His Being unmeasured by the temporal. Location in a place, implies a place prepared; and dwelling in a time, implies a time doled out. But He is without need: there is no prior one from whom He may receive, and none for whom He yearns within His perfect sphere of light. He contemplates His purity alone, His might unguaged.

"Unmeted purity is His domain. Eternal, He alone is the One who gives eternity; and radiant, He alone illuminates; and Life itself, no One but He gives life. The Blessed One, just He gives Blessedness; omniscient, just He confers all that is known; and always

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good, His goodness never dwindles, never fails. Redeeming mercy is His will, and grace His chief desire, though He himself may not be a beneficiary, for mercy, grace and all such gifts flow from His endless light. What can I say of One beyond all thought? A mere reflection of the light - for who could gaze upon its source? - I shed what light I have, proclaim as I have seen. Beyond decay, beyond all striving's aim; before all speech, and all that can be named, the head and heart of all that truly is, from Him All goodness flows to all if all exists apart from Him. No one of us can know the attributes of that immeasurable One, except for Him proceeding from that One, for He it was who told me what I know.

“He is the One who contemplates Himself in His own brilliant envelope, the spring of living water, luminous and pure, which gushes forth, an everlasting source that issues into all the spirit realms. In all directions He beholds His face within the pure reflection of this spring, and with His sight goes love, infused into the living water rippling all around. His self-perception - She who was conceived within the brilliance of His light - thus came to birth, the primal potency before the All, begotten from a pregnant mind. She is the perfect Forethought of the All - Her light shines like His light - the perfect power, the image of the One who is unseen, the virgin spirit perfect in all things. The Primal Power and Glory, immaculate in splendour, showing Him Impeccably, thus praised and glorified the spirit undefiled - an homage pure to Him who brought Her forth. For She knows Him: She is His thought, His image; She became the womb of everything, preceding all. This ageless, sexless offspring of the One now issued everlastingly from that totality unglimped by mortal eye: the first that could be viewed by spirit-gaze.

“Then Primal Power approached the Pure Unseen, requesting Him to grant a perfect child: the Gnosis. He agreed. And instantly I, the Gnosis, Primal Light, issued forth, and stood at once in rank with Perfect Glory, born to a true mother, who by her wish had helped to bring him forth. I glorified the One, and She Who is His Perfect Power. And thus we Two, in perfect Unity, by grace conferred, in radiant rank stood forth, to serve and glorify the unseen One. Again we asked: this time for Wisdom; again it was agreed. So Wisdom came forth, and with it came the Word, to glorify in speech the peerless Spirit overseen by none. This Pentad is the prime of entities reflecting that which otherwise can not be seen: the bounty of the Barbelo, at whose request came myself, the Truth and the Word.

“Thus Primal Glory gazed lovingly at Him, the limpid source, and reaching for His spark conceived a flame off-spring from that light. And thus was born the parents' only child, self-generated from divinity, the eldest of the fullness of the light, the ripeness of that virgin purity. The One whose sight blinds mortal eye was glad to see effulgent fruit swell on that bough, which is His all-providing Power, and He anointed me with chrism pressed from His own goodness, and from His own store of overflowing virtue's pure essence. And thus endowed, I waited on my source, and added to the glory that no eye can see of my progenitor, and His prevenient grace, the matrix of the All. And then I asked for Wisdom to work with Me. The One agreed, and swift on His consent that Wisdom came forth, and joined the heavenly rank of His great glory, and the Barbelo, and all who dwell in thought that needs no Word. But Wisdom would

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manifest herself, and so the Word then issued forth and joined the sphere of Gnosis and my originating Light, to His great glory. Thus the Word came forth, and through the Word Pleroma came, in which we live and move and have our very being.

“Wisdom thought a thought from out herself and not from anything conceived by her forebears. For she desired a thing exclusive to herself. This thought was not inert, and so it reified: short of perfection, shorn of that ideal beauty typical of her who gave him birth, a thwarted clone of one true-born of heavenly gene and stock. The One had not engaged or wed with her in divine union; no spouse or sire had courted her consent; no nuptial bliss had blessed the product of chaste amity; for what she willed was without conference of family, or consummation of conjugal love; but it was of concupiscence instead, without relationship, an impure fantasy, all self-engendered, selfishly-conceived and alien to the hymns its Mother sang when in accord with her pure ancestry. In this her wish came true: a monster formed, a snake with lion-jaws and eyes that blazed with horrid fire of self-will. She cast him out, beyond the zone of purity where he might not be seen by all her peers: from Wisdom born, in ignorance to dwell. And yet she could not help but cosset him in a refulgent cloud, and sit him on a throne in a celestial bower, where none might see him but the One who sees all that there is to see that lives, the Source of Life. She gave her child a name, as befits a ruler who inherits a great power: it is ‘Ialdabaoth’, Matter's Prince.

“Ialdabaoth strutted forth, and marched from place to place, far from the place where he was born. And annexing still more he formed self-glorifying spheres of fire that still flare on unto this day in heaven's dome. Then raising his right hand - his arrogance - he masturbated, begot Authorities, egged on by fantasies of unknown realms. And he created seven Angels, each with Powers sufficient for a year of days, and all in mimicry of that intuited from what was long before. But those whom he begot, those children of the ignorance and dark, lacked intimation of the source and principle from which all things had come. Their names are these (with their true features told): the first, sheep-faced, is Athoth; Elaios, the second, has a donkey-face; the third is Astaphaios, the hyena-faced. The seven-headed Yao is multi-miened, and Sabaoth has visage of a snake. The sixth is Adonin, the monkey-faced; the seventh Sabbataios, flaming-cheeked. A week of angels this way rules the world. But Ialdabaoth, who is Saklas, has a multitude of faces, more than all, so he can show himself in any face, just as he wills. He shares his nature with them - everything except the pristine power that he drew from his Mother, Wisdom: that he would not share. This made him cosmic lord.

“Because Sophia's light shone within him and gave him unique power: because of this he blasphemously called himself a god, conferring - so he thought - divinity upon his minion powers. And their "god" gave each of them a place to dwell, a so-called "heaven". Their urge to power instilled makes them believe that they are gods; but Truth is not deceived: their bestial natures are revealed to those who know. Their god-like attributes are part and parcel of a fantasy dreamed up by Saklas; but illusion will not have its way - except with those who dwell within the dream. The light of Truth will chase away the mist, dissolve its shifting, swirling shapes which frightened those who were deceived, like masks pinned onto wind-puffed cloaks. Such images invoke some dread reality, from which they draw their fearful power; and so it was with these, for Saklas shaped

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his schemes upon the basis of a kind of memory of what he had experienced in the womb of what is truly real. And when he saw the world he had created all layed out, and gazed upon the panoply which he had spun, enveloping his nakedness, his tongue clapped in his bell, and said: 'I am a jealous God. There is no God but me.' And so in his stupidity he gave the game away, and told his friends there was another god, a God who spurned the name that spurred this insane jealousy.

The Mother then began her moving to and fro, for she became aware of her deficiency, and how her light had dimmed. For when she saw her blemishes within the light of the Pleroma, she then drew across her face a veil of darkness: she no longer could return her consort's smile without deception, and be unabashed."

But I said, "Lord, what does it mean that 'she moved to and fro'?" And he smiled and said,

"Be not deceived by Moses when he says, 'Above the waters'. No, but when she saw the wickedness which happened through her son, a flood of tears - repentance - cleansed her of the veil. She was ashamed, but now her sight was clear. No longer stumbling in the dark her holy fear caused her to hover at the gate of Truth, unable to go in. This is the hovering which Moses meant. For when her offspring in his arrogance had taken power from his Mother he was ignorant of any provenance and thought her womb was all that there had been. Infatuated with his handiwork, he placed himself upon a pedestal, an idol to himself. And then she knew what kind of thing her after-birth now was, and how it lacked perfection's symmetry. And so Sophia turned back to her source, and raised her tear-filled eyes - and she was heard: the whole Pleroma and her pure siblings augmented her petition which, in her, was softened by humility. The One unseen in His inviolable sanctity gave the consent, and thus a healing flood of cleansing holiness washed over her to make her whole; for Providence agreed to supervise her in required austerity within a place of penance set aside beyond carnality and the snares of sin, where she could learn to manifest herself and good desires in purity.

"And then a voice came forth from out of the transcendent sphere: 'Lo, Anthropos! Behold the Man!' And when the chieftain of the tribe of Powers heard the voice he thought it was his Mother; he was ignorant of from whence it came. At once, however - ignorant or not - they were aware - unto their own damnation - that there was a holy, perfect Source above: the Mother-Father, and a providence, a faultless agent of the unseen One, the Parent of the All, who had brought forth all that there is, and whose beneficence is modestly displayed in Anthropos, with grace and symmetry of human form. A shiver went through Ialdabaoth's world, and rippled through its fundamental sands. And in the sky the purest element, transfigured by the bright epiphany, revealed that Truth is Beauty, Beauty Truth. And when the carnal gang beheld, a light infused the cavern of the world below. Their eyes were opened, and they saw revealed the shimmering glory of the Son of Man.

"The upstart god addressed his fawning clan: 'Come let us make a man to mimic what we have just seen - but tailored to our needs, to give some aim and purpose to our plans.' So each and every one of them then gave a little something from his psychic

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pouch, and made an entity from out themselves, each adding layer and layer of plastic soul, along the lines of what they thought they saw. Thus a reflection turned into a thing that looked just like the sole original - the perfect Anthropos. And then they said, 'Now let us call him "Adam", so that his name may light our high road to imperium.' And so the Powers began to spin their stuff. The first one, Demon Karma, then began to make a psychic frame to hang things on. And Mystery gave means to move the joints; Hypocrisy then padded out the scheme Conferring substance on their staked-out claim. Then Lordship gave a vital force for growth, and Kingship gave a lust for life itself; then Worldly-Wisdom gave from out of his store a comeliness to bound this little world of futile fantasy; and then, at last, deft Wisdom wove a gleaming canopy to cover where he lodged his cunning throne. And so this wondrous work, this body came about - not yet of flesh, but harbouring a vital force that tapped the secrets of their universe, and their sevenfold harmony, encapsulated microcosmically in sense and a potential agency. And so these angel-demons toiled away in glee until their puppet had all come about. But yet there was a want and lack which they could not supply: the thing had no vocation to fulfil, and thus no will to try, and lay inert - until a dream, an aspiration graced the dawning day.

"The Mother wanted to retrieve the power which she had given to her bastard son. In innocence she came and humbly asked the Mother-Father of transcendent All Who is most merciful. And He decreed that I should go deep down to that cold place below where ignorance prevails. My mission was to liberate the power from Saklas' breast - Sophia's gift - by planting in his mind a notion that would bear the fruit of life. And so a thought came unsolicited to Ialdabaoth: 'Blow into his mouth your holy breath, and what you made will rise.' And so, unwittingly, the demiurge released the prison door: the pneuma fled from out of those boastful lips, and found a home by transmigrating into the psychic breast of Adam, tabernacling in a shrine the powers had patterned on what they briefly glimpsed from afar of the holiest of holy. That body stretched its limbs and waxed in strength, transfigured by the glory of true life. Elsewhere, within the stony hearts of all the Powers the bitter weed of envy sprang, for they believed this fragrant bloom was fed by them - that their hearts' blood had soaked the soil from whence it sprang, and that it was their own vitality that ran along the veins of that bright Man. With their flaws exposed by his wise luminosity, they cast him in a pit, and heaped around him all their dung - the heavy excrescence of their days.

"The One, then brimming with parental love, at once felt pity for His spirit-kind which Saklas had unknowingly released, but which still wandered in the orbit of the Powers, an orphan of a kingly line without a regent, subject to the whim of upstart tyrants who were themselves in thrall to time. And so He sent in His beneficence a helper for Sophia's hard-pressed power - the refugee in Adam's breast - a light from Light, a living icon of true Life: the one called Zoe, Adam's ghostly nurse and teacher, toiling at his side, to show the way to his beginning and his end, and how he fell, and how again might rise. This Eva nestled in the new Man's heart, out of the Powers' sight, so that Wisdom might with healing grace thus find her lost way home. And Adam shone, refulgent in this light, with a rainbow-aura, the envy of the Powers who made him. And his mind outshone them all.

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"The whole array of rulers and their clones bent down and saw how Man surpassed them all; and so the plethora of psychic powers conferred, and then amassed the elements - fire, water and earth, and mixed them with the winds that roam this nether globe. Thus catalysed by psychic force, the planned reaction then took place, and Adam came within the mortal sphere, coiled there and then of base material, engendered from desire within the dark, enlivened by a soulless breath, mere air, unspiritual. Thus was our fetter forged, our dungeon made, by which these bandits now enslaved the Man, who, in the darkness, soon forgot the light and grew accustomed to the stench of death. This was the fall to end all falls, the end confounding all true ends. And yet not quite: he was indwelt by pre-existent light - by Zoe, shedding dawn into his cell.

"The Chief of Archons then detained the man and placed him in a garden of delights and of deceit, for his delight is grief, and what he calls comely is grotesque; for bliss within this garden is a dream, and all its vegetation feeds on death, and all its fruits, addictive, make weak slaves of everyone who sups their sickly nightmare sap. And furthermore there is therein a tree which they - the Powers - dub 'Life'. But do not be deceived or mystified: what they call 'Life' is but a puff, a breeze, a mere ill wind that blows man's fragile barque off course as he pursues perfection's quest. And this is its anatomy: its roots are bitterness; its branches block the light of Life; its leaves exude the dew of hatred and deceit; its blooms drop nectar of forgetfulness on all that once was good; its fruit instils a lust for death and a return back to the dark in which the seed was sown, and those who taste its flesh sink down into the pit and fall into a Life-denying rut. But planted there also another tree took root, which has a fruit no carnal man should eat, for it confers a Knowledge which can not allow contentment with this world and how things are; and that is why the ones who rule this world dictated to the flesh they had enthralled to never taste of her - for that tree is Zoe's - and tried to ring its boughs with poisoned fog so that the Man might not receive enlightenment and so behold the weakness and futility of flesh. But Adam heard my call and ate."

I said to the Saviour, "Was it not the serpent that taught the woman to eat?" He smiled and said,

"The snake taught fleshly woman about sex - an opportunist gesture guaranteed to bring pollution and destruction. He had hoped to benefit thereby. Meanwhile Ialdabaoth knew why Adam turned against his sway: the voice of Zoe urged him on; the Word's clear tones were heard above the petty Powers' chatterings. And so the prince of this world had to find a way to reclaim power conferred upon this mortal man - a precious gift derived from the celestial dam. He therefore dropped a trance on Adam, stopping up the flow of Life."

I said to him, "Lord, what is the 'trance'?" He smiled and said,

"Believe it not as Moses wrote in his first book that God put him to sleep; for it was over higher intellect the veil was drawn, and his perceptive power that was thus mystified. And so one higher than the gods became a clod. A prophet knew this state in Adam's later sons when he said (as spokesman of the One): 'Their minds I will make heavy so that they may not yet fully see or understand.' Meanwhile unseen by Saklas Zoe hid

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within the depths of Adam's mind beyond the reach of blundering demiurge. But he thought she was still in there somewhere - that 'she' who is elusive of all impure grasp, a Light unseen by all who look to impure parts. So Saklas clutched a rib and tore it out and with it part of that same psychic stuff with which he was himself endowed, and with that substance moulded accidents, and made the woman, shaped as near as he could form to that bright presence he somehow had sensed - to Zoe. This same woman was inspired with that same precious breath which surged within the breast of Man, itself a guest within the demiurge's heart, who never could with his own puny powers - as Moses claimed - create such beauty only from a rib.

“Then Adam's drunkenness subsided and the pall was lifted from his mind by one untouched by power's debauchery, who washed his eyes with pure sobriety; and thus by Zoe's ministry the Man now saw and recognised his counter-part, and said, 'This bone is of my bones, this flesh is of my flesh'. And so it is that man will leave his father and his mother and will cleave unto his wife, so that they may be one flesh, and so that flesh and psyche may be as complete as matter can allow, so that both may grow, with virtue superseding raw desire. And virtue's source - Sophia's power - stirred within his heart, and recognised its kind: for she was Zoe, radiant with chaste requited love, but known to him as 'Eve, the Mother of the Living and the Loved.' And thus salvation's fruitful plan was sealed.

“And Zoe taught them about me from the tree, and like an eagle spreading puissant wings she gave her aerie living things to eat so that one day it too might learn to soar beyond that filthy crevice, ignorance, its nakedness replaced with plumage fit for gods. Thus at the darkest hour the dawn began to break. Just as an overseer hamstringing a slave who tried once to escape, so Saklas, when he saw the light had shed, found ways to make this earth a darker place. He made the husband stronger than the wife in limb, so that man might claim a spiritual domain irrelevant to Truth derived from high authority - for Saklas knew he must divide and rule. And then he cast them out of Paradise, and caused the sky to frown, and made the ground to freeze, and forced the couple to seek shelter in dark caves.

“And Saklas gazed on Eve, whose graceful limbs were bathed in gnostic glamour from above, and lust flared in his heart, and a desire to penetrate that awesome mystery, and colonise her belly with his seed. But matter and pure spirit cannot mate, and Zoe's hallowed sanctuary was barred and borne by angels to another place. Then Saklas raped poor Eve, and in due course two sons were born, and Cain and Abel named; and thanks to Saklas, these his bastards were endowed with seed to replicate themselves, the psychic and the carnal; one inspired by wind, the other by Sophia's ghost. Meanwhile, within a place of Life the Man called Adam met the Woman Eve, and each encountering each within their very core begot the Son of Man called Seth, the true descendant of Sophia in the line of Anthropos. This son was blessed by those on high, and his anointed offspring to eternity, for these are called to dwell within perfection's courts, and taught to spell their names inscribed upon the scroll of Life, while monuments to flesh collapse upon the soil of sin. For those who truly live cannot abide the dark, and must light a lamp and visit all the catacombs where the enlightened have been forced to dwell and lead them to the sunlight up above. Thus shall the righteous

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gather, and assist each other on the way, so that true mankind might find its rightful place within the All, and holiness, made whole, might be complete."

I then said, "Lord, will all the souls escape to the pure light?" He answered and said to me,

"These mysteries can only be explained to those whose nature shares the mystery. Sophia-Zoe will descend and greet the power that dwells within such perfect hearts. And worthy, they will join the four great Lights. And there they will be purified of all the blood and mire besmirching the crude flesh - for they did not devote themselves to vice, but turned their gaze toward the unseen throng in which they will receive an honoured place unsullied by desire, or jealousy, or greed, or anger, or such poisoned streams that stink within the Churches here below. Thus undeflected by unworthy things, except the burden of their wayward flesh, they tread the path of Life expectantly with upturned gaze, and longing for the sight of those Receivers who, with warm embrace, will help them from their burden, and conduct them to their place prepared within the Light. For they endured, and they bore everything; and now they have prevailed: the prize is theirs. They gain their right, and win eternal Life."

I said to him, "Lord, the souls of those who did not do these works, but on whom Sophia-Zoe descended, will they be rejected?" He answered and said to me,

"Sophia-Zoe's grace, when it comes down, is irresistible, and once received, will change for good the saved recipient. For sons and daughters of the True Man's line possess Sophia's power, which makes them stand and stride with purpose on the plains of life, since that cold breath once given by the powers, though strong, has no direction, like the winds which sweep across the cold benighted wastes. But Zoe's breath will blow Sophia's spark into a living flame which melts like wax the counterfeit identity of Man, and in consuming, lights the path to bliss."

And I said, "Lord, where will these souls go when they have come out of their flesh?" And he smiled and said to me,

"In some the wind will only serve to fan the flame to more intensity, which then, if tended by a providential care will send up a perfect holocaust, a fragrance lingering everlastingly within the perfumed cloisters of repose."

And I said, "Lord, those who have not known the All, where will their souls go?" And he said to me,

"Those blown off course by wrecking pirate winds will founder on the reefs of sin, lured on by treacherous lights, and so will break and sink down to the mud of lost forgetfulness. But what there is of uncorroded gold endures, and may in dreary course of time be gathered by the Powers and put to work to launch another vessel on the sea of this uncertain life. If piloted by knowledge out of reck of carnal men, it may then find a wondrous continent which those who built it did not know was there, and so the weary sailor may find rest."

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And I said, "Lord, does then the soul become incarnate once again?" Then he rejoiced when I asked him this, and he said to me,

"O truly, you are blessed among the blessed, for you have understood! The soul may join the crew who are well-piloted. The ship is unintelligent, and may be changed, and once the promised land is reached may then be left behind, the voyage at an end."

And I said, "Lord, where will the souls go who did not heed the pilot's voice?" Then he said to me,

"Ah! Those who gave themselves to mutiny, and squandered all their treasure at each port where they could find debauchery, will rot above the waves or underneath - it does not matter where - and join the sludge and foul refuse that flows through the stinking gills of beasts who roam the depths and feed upon the damned."

And I said, "Lord, how did the distinction between the saved and the damned become obscured?" Then he said to me,

"The Mother-Father, rich in mercy, One who shows concern although He has no need, He sent you Zoe, nurturing the power that dwells within the heart of His own race, and those who turn their face unto the light. When Saklas realised that you surpassed him in your loftiness of consciousness, he wanted to appropriate your mind, not wise enough himself to realise that his desire was well beyond his grasp. He made a plan with his authorities, and by incestuous union with their dam, Heimarmene was made. Thus the supreme and cruellest jailer then came into being, with her array of manacles and chains called "times" and "seasons", "moments", "ages", "dates", those fetters from which none could be exempt outside the All, neither gods nor mortal men, all now doomed to live within a space of time that was the past, or will be days to come - but never now, the present never seized, with minds obsessed with what will be and what there might have been, with schemes and plans stretched to infinity, but that eternal "now" beyond their ken. And hence the consciousness of the Beyond eluded him again.

I have said everything to you that you might write them down and give them secretly to your fellow spirits, for this is the mystery of the eternal race."

Cursed be everyone who would exchange these things for a gift, whether for food or for drink or for clothing or for any such thing. Pray for the blessed spirits, and for me who made this book, whose name in the flesh is "Philip". Peace be upon you and all the saints. Amen.

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THE TESTAMENT OF SOPHIA

Conceived immaculate, I nonetheless
Desired a thing exclusive to my Self:
Sophia exercised effective will,
With freedom to desire as I chose.
Conceiving Self, therefore, I hatched a scheme
Within the womb of what I thought was real.

But what I willed was not immaculate:
It marred the vision I had once enjoyed
While contemplating true reality.
He gazed upon the waters of the Deep,
And when he saw himself he laughed and said,
"I am 'I am'. There is no God but me."

His mother heard the godling's bombast; so
From then I knew what kind of thing he was.
I turned again in sorrow to my source
And caught a spark which turned to living flame
Fed by the fuel of love. That fire took shape,
And all that Matter sought to emulate

Appeared. No eye could but be opened at
The sight transcending every faculty,
Whose finger traced in letters of pure light,
"The One is one. There is no other One.
Unnamed, beyond all mortal register,
He is alone, unique, without a peer.

Since he does not subsist in time, He needs
No life that throbs with temporality,
Nor does he strive to overcome a lack,
For He is perfect in His boundless sphere.
Thus none can know that One except for one
Proceeding from the One, and that I am."

On meeting Matter then this testament
Fell to the Deep as incandescent drops
Towards that space and time where nature's laws
Are fetters from which none can be exempt;
Where all must yearn for what there might have been,
With that eternal "now" beyond their ken.

Yet what descended still remains unquenched,
Although imprisoned in a tomb of clay:
We know of our beginning, and our end,

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From whence we came, and whither we must go.
A mere reflection of His light, I shed
What light I have, proclaiming all I know.

COMMENTARY

1. This is how Sophia became involved with her offspring Ialdabaoth, and how her privileged spiritual status led to the imprisonment in matter of elements purer than herself:
2. In the beginning, "Sophia brought proprioception into being.
3. Will, or desire, was integral to the nature of Sophia; the object and subject of her will was "Self". This Self needed to define its-self by bringing into being something completely separate from the original source of consciousness. This was "Matter".
4. Self desired and willed some thing separate from the source of all consciousness. This unconscious thing was Matter. Sophia commanded Matter, and her Word shaped the World. Self ruled the World, and believed itself to be the supreme reality. It took the Deed of Sophia and imprisoned it in Law.
5. Sophia acted, and brought about Matter; then Sophia spoke, and brought order to Matter. Sophia expresses herself as the immanent Logos. Logos manifests itself as Reason and the proprioceptive Self. From Logos Ialdabaoth and the Archons were born; they promulgate Law.
6. Sophia endowed Matter with proprioception. Ialdabaoth, who is Matter endowed with proprioception, found expression as Self, which Ialdabaoth declared to be the supreme reality - a development which Sophia did not anticipate. Sophia's continuing involvement with proprioceptive matter has expressed itself in the material world as Logos. In inanimate matter this manifests itself as order, pattern and structure. Once Matter had come into being Sophia's originally transcendent nature could only express itself immanently as Logos. Although all of these entities derive ultimately from the Source, they themselves are not the result of an act of will which was deliberately providential. They are the result of Sophia's freedom to exercise her will in whatever way she chose.
7. Sophia wished to bring into being something completely separate from the Source. She wished to gaze on herself; she therefore created the waters in which she could see her own reflection. When she saw herself, she fell in love with herself, and her carnal desire produced Matter. The first, "outward" and "downward" action of Sophia - away from the One - produced Time and then chaotic Matter. When a proprioceptive element was introduced into matter there occurred a "fall" into time and a pointless interplay

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between will and matter. "Will" existed before proprioception, and is the fundamental precondition of life.

8. Sophia introduced a proprioceptive element into matter. ("I am 'I am.'") This fall is the story of will seeking to express itself through matter in time; a pre-condition of re-ascent must be the by-passing of proprioceptive will. That detour is not an act in time - acts of asceticism can simply be another manifestation of the same will to power.

9. Sophia's abhorrence of the development whereby proprioceptive matter regards itself as the ultimate reality (as represented by "Ialdabaoth's boast") prompts a constant striving "upwards" towards, and an ever greater proximity to the One. A paradox can be seen in Sophia's subsequent attempt to use will to negate will and return to the Source. Having sought to establish an identity separate from the Source, she realises that in order to achieve her true identity she must return to that same Source. This process transforms Will into Faith, Desire into "Hope", and Law into "Love". This transcendence of materiality and negation of Self makes room for a hypostasis of the Transcendent Consciousness: the Gnosis.

10. When the Gnosis meets Faith, the storms of will subside. The child of this union is Patience, as it waits for its consummation in the Gnosis. Gnostic Man must suffer. His attempt to remain detached from the imperatives of Self sets him against the might of Ialdabaoth and involves him in a bitter struggle against his insistent demands. He will be consoled, however, by the knowledge that his return to the One is inevitable and victory is assured.

11. In the face of Truth Self dissolves. The process of Enlightenment will intensify the presence of Truth in the world as Gnostics ascend the transcendental ladder. Eventually the Pleroma will be re-united: all the emanations of Sophia and the Gnosis will revert to their source, Sophia and the Gnosis will return to the centre, and Matter itself will disappear.

12. Sophia's re-orientation towards the One has also made it possible for the One to make a reciprocal gesture, producing the Gnosis. The Gnosis has entered the material universe in a pure unmediated form, and taken up temporary residence randomly in proprioceptive Matter. The continuing emanation of the Gnosis as Sophia journeys towards the One has now initiated the Eschaton, and brought about this definitive statement of Truth, of which, previously, only glimpses were seen in established religions and philosophies. Gnosis will form the vanguard of the Eschaton as the material universe begins to retreat and dissolve. Eventually nothing will remain to prevent the Pleroma from being re-united once and for all with Sophia and the Gnosis at the centre with the One, and with the Logos at the perimeter. The Logos will be immanent in selves transcended as far as matter allows by Agape.

13. Nous emanated from the ineffable together with its shadow Will. The interaction between the two produced Sophia and her own shadow Matter. It was therefore within the nature of Sophia to possess motive will. This motive will could be directed either towards or away from its origin. In the event, both movements took place. The outward

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impulse moved Sophia towards her own shadow. This movement produced Consciousness - "Saklas" - while the compensating movement towards the One produced that Gnosis which became trapped in Matter. The universe as we know it came about and continues to evolve as a result of the action of Proprioception on Matter.

14. "Creation" was a process of centrifugal departure from the ultimate reality to levels where consciousness was increasingly attenuated. Inert matter was the end-product of this process. Although matter and consciousness are fundamentally different in kind, they may interact. It is, however, within the nature of consciousness that it is perpetually aware that there is more potential to be fulfilled and that this fulfillment is obstructed by matter. To return to the highest levels of consciousness, therefore, it is necessary to overcome these obstructions. But there is a definite gulf between the realm of the Gnosis and that of inert, unconscious matter. It is only when the proprioceptive element of consciousness is introduced into matter that we have what might be termed the "fall" into time and the pointless interplay between will and matter, which is sinister to the extent it interferes with the Gnostic's communion with his Source.

15. The Gnosis is that intimation of the spiritual realm which is within the spiritual nature of the Gnostic. Sophia, who is an emanation from Gnosis and as such is its agent, brought forth order (represented by Ialdabaoth) within the realm of matter. The impulse to order is genuinely divine; the impulse to worship order as an end in itself is not, but is rather a form of idolatry prevalent throughout the phenomenon of religion. Because intuition of the divine (Sophia) resides in the human mind, it is co-mingled and confused with, and corrupted by other mental faculties which may be grouped under the heading of "intelligence." The Gnosis is an awareness which, as an aspect of pure consciousness (the One), is an end in itself; intelligence (Sophia) is a proprioceptive mental faculty which, although divine in origin, is usually directed towards matter and subject to the direction of carnal will (Ialdabaoth). If intelligence is to be directed or re-directed towards true consciousness, there must first be a true perception (the Gnosis). This perception makes the spiritual in Gnostic Man.

16. Matter is the "dark" side of spirit. Sophia creates order-in-matter (Ialdabaoth) which is an improvement on the previous state of affairs, but the uneasy alliance between matter and spirit means that matter is shown up as ugly. But the order is approved of by the One. It is this approval which enables repentance to come about. When the impulse towards order-in-matter re-directs itself towards true consciousness then order can be re-oriented to the transcendence of matter. Indeed, because Sophia's original place within the Pleroma cannot be denied or negated, even as idolatry is being practised (Ialdabaoth's boast) the true end of intelligence is perceived, as we say, "deep within the heart". Because it cannot be denied, it expresses itself in human aesthetic and moral sensibility. It is as a result of this process that Beauty and Truth may be found within the material world.

17. The original creation was spiritual, an extension of the fullness of the divine nature. Sophia was the hem of the Glory, adjacent to the void. Seeing the Glory, she wished to make it her own. The infinite void was a temptation to her; she wished to fill it with the Glory re-made as her own. This she did, without consulting the Pleroma. And so the

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carnal element came into being. In order to bring order to this matter, Sophia had to draw upon the spiritual resources of her own nature. Thus Ialdabaoth ("God") was born. He set about eliminating any awareness of a higher being to whom the world owed homage. Sophia saw this and repented. As a result of this repentance, enlightenment was dispensed; the Gnosis came into the world. But some light became trapped, and will remain so until matter is purged away.

18. The Word of Sophia, Logos, manifests itself as pattern, as reason, and as the proprioceptive awareness which maintains the integrity of Self. In order to do this it must monitor its surroundings and make the necessary adaptations to its own perceived integrity. Paradoxically, therefore, it needs to transcend and modify Self in order to maintain it. This paradox can be seen at work in human society. Proprioceptive awareness seeks to create and maintain ordered communities in order to protect the interests of Self. Thus Logos in the human social sphere gives rise to "Nomos" ("Law"). Nomos expresses itself in notions of justice and rights and the laws which enshrine them, and requires the suppression of extreme forms of individualism. The punishments meted out to offenders involve the various degrees of obliteration of personal identity. Human beings tend to see Nomos as a cosmic archon of the same order as Logos, and imagine a cause-effect relationship between social behaviour and the laws of nature. Hence there is a tendency to see pain as caused by transgression and to suppose that death can be escaped by obedience to human laws. This is a fallacy. Suffering has no meaning, and the destiny either before or beyond the grave and the pyre is not shaped by choice.

19. Sophia's repentance, part selfish as parent, and part selfless in her desire to enlighten, created a reflection of the Gnosis, just as Saklas was a reflection of Will. Because Sophia's revelation of Gnosis was to a certain extent a moral act, Humankind have an element in their nature raised above mere selfish gratification. This we call "conscience". In seeking to enlighten her offspring Sophia had to point him to something higher than herself: her aim was not to dispute his priority by putting forward her own claim - predominance in the material realm was not worth having - but to point out to him its absurdity. This was how true morality entered the world.

20. And Sophia repented of her creation of something apart from the One, and her repentance brought Conscience into being. Will and Desire wander through the World, restrained only by Law. But wherever they meet Conscience, Will becomes Faith, Desire becomes Hope, and Law becomes Love. Faith and Hope call upon the One, and Love opens the gates of Matter's prison. Thus the Gnosis comes into the World. And the Gnosis will destroy Self, and liberate the Logos, returning it to Sophia. And she shall return her Logos to the One as Praise.

21. Sophia's continuing involvement with Matter expressed itself as Logos, which through the agency of Ialdabaoth shaped the cosmos, and as Conscience, which gave rise to Beauty and Truth in Ialdabaoth's creation.

22. The One eternally wills Sophia. The first, "outward" and "downward" impulse of Sophia - away from the One - produces chaotic Matter. Sophia brings Matter into order

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by endowing it with Proprioception. But the self which Proprioception brings about considers itself to be supreme. This unwelcome development prompts Sophia to return "upwards" towards the One. A reciprocal gesture of the One produces the Gnosis, which is mediated to the material world without providential intent by Conscience. Human beings become indwelt by the Gnosis in varying degrees. Meanwhile, Sophia's return to the One means that the Proprioception endowed by Sophia can be extended into Conscience within Man. That which is related to the One (Sophia and the Gnosis) is eternal, while that which is separate (Matter and Proprioception) dissolves. This is a perpetually recurring drama which unfolds at the macrocosmic and microcosmic levels.

23. The Gnosis emanated from the ineffable together with its by-product Will. The being whom the One willed should know him was Sophia, the prototypical Self. Sophia her-Self possessed free motive will. This could be directed either towards or away from its origin, the former movement producing self-transcendence, the latter self-obsession; the former an expansion of consciousness, the latter a diminution. In the event, both movements took place. The outward impulse - away from the One - produced Proprioception and its by-product (or "shadow") Matter, the cul-de-sac of the movement away from the One. The compensating movement back towards the One induced a hypostatic revelation of the Gnosis which became "trapped" in the material world. This latter movement, Conscience, was appropriated by Proprioception and incorporated into its response to the revelation of the Gnosis: the creation of *homo sapiens*.

24. The universe as we know it came about and continues to evolve as a result of the surges in consciousness and pattern produced by the interaction between Proprioception and its by-product Matter. The Gnosis, which as a result of the Will of the One manifested itself as Sophia, is therefore not to be confused with "Consciousness", the child of Sophia. The latter is the means whereby Matter was made aware of its Self. Consciousness's primary impulse is towards its own offspring Matter, in which Self is ultimately manifested as an inert Gestalt, a stolid lumpishness. If Conscience seeks to ascend towards Sophia and then on towards the Gnosis, Proprioception wishes to descend towards Matter as Will seeks to assert itself on suitable "material". Sophia invested Proprioceptive Matter with Conscience when she returned to her source. Conscience is therefore attuned to principles which transcend material Self-ishness. It points to an order which is both different and superior to the material order, and which makes demands incompatible with it. It therefore perceives that "God" - the personification of proprioceptive will - is at a far lower level than the supreme reality. Sophia therefore has a pivotal role both in the revelation and corruption of the Gnosis. Sophia tends to bring into being systems and their related hierarchies and terminologies. But the True Reality - the One - is beyond, and is perceived by the Conscience which Sophia instills by her repentance.

25. Proprioception is the prime characteristic of Carnal Man. Conscience is the hallmark of the Psychic in Man. He who is indwelt by the Gnosis, to the extent that he becomes aware of the fact, is called "Gnostic", the Spiritual Man. While all may move between the poles of Matter and Conscience, the gulf between the Gnostic and the Carnal in Man is unbridgeable. The Logos may become incorporated into existing

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religions out of the compassion of Gnostics for Psychic Man and conscientised Matter, but the Gnosis in its purest form manifests itself as detachment, since any attempt to gratify (or, indeed, to suppress) even the worthiest of desires is an expression of carnal self-will. The Gnosis brings no worldly consolations: neither a sense of moral superiority to motivate; nor a covenant with a personal god to inspire; nor a divine providence to wait upon. The Spiritual in Man needs no solace, however, because he knows that his eventual return to the One is inevitable.

26. "Conscience" is the active manifestation in moral decision-making of an innate spiritual nature. This spiritual nature is identical with, and participates in, the nature of a Spirit which transcends the material universe. Conscience is the voice of an "alter ego" emanating from a differently-constituted identity. As the voice of our spiritual nature, it may conflict with the demands of our carnal nature.

27. The gulf between the Carnal, the creations of the demiurge Ialdabaoth, and the Spiritual, emanations from the Ultimate One, is explicable. The existence of a middle order in humankind, verifiable in the persons who, spiritually speaking aspire to so much in organised religion in all its various manifestations, and yet so consistently contradict their declared ideals, is not so easy to explain. The descent of the Spiritual into Matter by means of Sophia's repentance had a sacrificial element. Ialdabaoth believed himself to be supreme. In order to enlighten him (and to simultaneously chastise him) Sophia had to reveal the Spiritual to the Material, thereby causing some of the latter to be ensnared and temporarily abandoned in the return of the Immaculate to the Fullness. As well as a providential act, Sophia's act was also an act of proud foolishness. She had become involved with her offspring Ialdabaoth, if only to discipline him. (Sophia, although herself an Immaculate Conception, is subordinate to "The Spiritual" because she needs to effect a "movement towards" the Spiritual. "The Spiritual", on the other hand, do not and do not have to "move" anywhere: they simply "are", and need "do" nothing.) But the action of a Being of Spirit - Sophia herself - in an impulse part parentally selfish, and part selfless in its desire to enlighten, created something hybrid, both Carnal and Spiritual, a reflection of her rightly-directed Will, just as Ialdabaoth was a reflection of her Desire. Because Sophia's revelation of the Spiritual was a moral act, it brought about the Psychic. This has a moral element which raises it above mere Desire. But this is contaminated by Sophia's Desire. The Carnal and the Psychic therefore emanate from the same source, but are of a different order. The Psychic is at its best when the moral element is combined with Ialdabaoth's impulse to order and shape; we see it exemplified in the reforming saints and other "spiritual" leaders of all religions. It is, nevertheless, not of the same order as the Spiritual, which is a seed which grows and bears fruit secretly.

28. The fall of Sophia is an eternally recurring process; the descent of the Spiritual and its return likewise. The journey of the Gnostic to the One is a solitary way; as he arrives, another departs. He who arrives takes nothing of Matter with him; nothing of the world is redeemed.

29. Sophia brings forth order within the realm of matter. This order has divine approval. It is this approval which enables repentance to come about. When the impulse towards

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order-in-matter re-directs itself towards true consciousness (the Wholeness) then order can be re-oriented to the transcendence of matter.

30. The way to salvation is through transcendence of the self through knowledge. A precondition of authentic consciousness is a recognition of the fundamental inconsequentiality of the material order. Consciousness therefore brings few consolations: there is no sense of moral superiority to motivate; there is no covenant with a personal god to inspire; and there is no divine providence to comfort. Only pure Knowledge saves: the Knowledge that knows itself by itself, uncontaminated by emotion. It is not a gift. It is the right and the burden of those imprisoned yet already free.

31. True consciousness is a cross to bear. There is comfort, nevertheless, for the Spiritual in recognising the cause of his exile, and the nature of his destination. Revelation brings news of home.

32. Humankind are ultimately separated one from another not by race or religion or culture, but by the degree of their response to ultimate questions. They may either ignore them altogether, content themselves with answers which are comforting but unsatisfactory in the light of both Reason and Conscience, or face up to answers which satisfy as far as is possible both Reason and Conscience, but which are disturbing and unsettling. All of the answers may be subjected to the reason which serves us so well in our day-to-day living. But this faculty can take us only so far; it cannot lead us to the ultimate answer. Only Reason combined with Conscience can take us further.

33. Only when the selfish anthropocentrism of the major world religions and ideologies has been abandoned, and the human race settles for a more modest place in the ecosphere, will its habitat be assured. Only those whose minds participate in that which transcends all species are able to sustain this awareness.

34. Proprioceptive will manifests itself in systems and their related hierarchies and terminologies. Beneath all there is one system, one illusion. It has a demonic beauty, and torments all life with false promises. Its manifestations rise and fall. Its exponents say that the root of their system is "God" - a god made in their own image. Those who worship him, worship themselves. But the True Reality is beyond; it can not be perceived by anything other than the Gnosis.

35. "The Spiritual" can not be identified by any external physical or mental characteristics. It cannot therefore form any identifiable group in society. The host is perhaps from time to time able to recognise in others the traits which it has identified living within itself, but this is no guarantee that what he has perceived is a decisive indication: the more authentic the trait, the less perceptible it is to the senses of another being.

36. Proprioception is self-consciousness which, together with Will, typifies the "higher" forms of life. Proprioceptive matter - the living organism - is aware in its more complex

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manifestations that the Will has a vital role in survival. It is also aware, however, that there is no guarantee of its successful domination of its environment and the elimination of competition. "Successful" Will is therefore projected as an external entity which is at once revered as being the key to survival, and feared as an elusive entity which can assist in the material agent's struggle for dominant survival. This externalisation of the Will is not entirely fantasy: the Will is a genuine mystery as a vital constituent of the higher forms of animate matter, and there is a universal principle which transcends its individual manifestations. This principle may be personified as the demiurge "Ialdabaoth", also known as "Saklas" and "Samael".

37. The Supreme Being and the material order are of different categories. The Ultimate Consciousness may reveal Itself through the veil of matter, but if God became part of a creation then it would come within the power or possession of some men, for such may be the fate of anything created.

38. Because the material world is irredeemable, there is no point in forming a Church which promotes the cause of faith in redemption. Those who organise themselves into such a "Church" will fall prey to corruptions which are the inevitable result of admitting people who see entry either as a means of improving their material situation, or of extending material blessings into eternity, or as a way of seeking endorsement of their own supposed specialness.

39. The world and its events are irrelevant. The Truth can express itself in myths - any number, in any configuration. Any appropriate vehicle will do. But the debased salvation of "orthodoxy" must demonstrate results. It therefore needs supposed actualities, even if they do not abide by the normal rules of nature. It also needs "history" for another reason. "History" relies on witnesses. Witnesses have a unique authority. If the power-seekers can reduce salvation, which in essence is a non-temporal spiritual transformation, to a merely physical event, and establish a claim to be witnesses of that event, their power is secured.

40. The Spiritual in Man does not regard matter as "evil", neither does he regard it as "good". He may categorise it as "inferior" or even as "degenerate". This is a way of expressing its distance from pure consciousness by using a kind of ethical metaphor: as "evil" is distant from "good" in the perception of psychic man, so matter is distant from consciousness. The Carnal seeks to bring order into matter. This is an expression of a will to power. It is only when this purely carnal order-in-matter is measured over against the non-material realm that morality is born. If there is a knowledge that there is a spiritual realm present, and there is an impulse towards it, then the material realm will be measured over against the spiritual realm by those who apprehend it. Dissatisfaction with things as they are in the material sphere engenders morality and is codified by the Psychic into Law. The Psychic then extend its provisions to the Carnal by promoting sanctions, real or imagined.

41. Anything experienced is, by its nature, less than true reality. The enlightened possess true perspective as part of their nature - it cannot be acquired by effort.

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42. The universe was created by a demiurge from unconscious matter. The demiurge emanated ultimately from the Supreme Being. The carnal or "hylic" in Man is ignorant of the supreme being. The Psychic in Man is able to comprehend the existence of a demiurge. The Pneumatic in Man has the capacity to know fully the Supreme Being. Hylic man will return to entirely to matter. Psychic man may be re-born within the material universe. Pneumatic man uniquely within the material universe shares the nature of the Supreme Being. The material universe and events within it are without meaning. The providence of the demiurge is imperfect. Pneumatic man's ultimate destiny is to enter into complete union with the Supreme Being.

43. Nature is morally neutral. Balance between the species is maintained by a deliberate wastefulness. Human beings, like all species, are designed to produce more offspring than can be supported in the expectation that most will die before reaching sexual maturity and old age. The Petrine view that the procreative process has been designed by a benign creator is not supported by the observable facts. The current success of the human species in enabling its offspring to survive is a temporary phenomenon. In the long term, nature is indifferent to the survival of Man. Man, however, is not indifferent to his own survival. Over-population threatens the survival of the species. Love demands that we limit our procreative activity until adequate resources can be available to all the human population. This limitation includes artificial contraception and abstinence; it does not include abortion. Killing an existing life for the benefit of those who have a survival-advantage (ie the mature parents) is an unloving act. Killing for meat falls into the same category. It is palliated only by the victim's lack of awareness of, and therefore anxiety about, the actuality of death. Those who oppose abortion are selfishly anthropocentric; they should also oppose meat-eating. Regrettably, nature upholds meat-eating; it also upholds the culling of offspring to assist survival. Only those whose consciousness transcends nature can knowingly and willingly desist from both as far as the burden of their flesh allows.

44. The material and spiritual orders make incompatible demands. If Man is to move closer to the Ultimate One, which is his destiny, he must seek to raise himself up to the spiritual, and not seek to abase the spiritual to the level of the material. Material considerations will always distort the Truth about Eternal Life.

45. Pneumatic man is, by dint of his physical nature, drawn into the preoccupations of hylic and psychic man. But because he shares in higher consciousness he will be detached from their power-games. He will see the material organism in context, and appreciate how its behaviour is determined by matter and will. He will therefore be detached from "this world", and perceive its dictates as stemming from a lower order of reality. Such a stance will confuse psychic man. On the one hand, he will associate detachment with altruism, since the psychic man will often ignore his own need for physical gratification in order to obey the imperative of his own will to power. He will therefore identify the higher consciousness with what he has categorised as "good". On the other hand, the pneumatic man's apparent refusal to engage totally with the psychic man's own agenda the latter will associate with the hylic man's inability to transcend his own immediate self-interest - in other words, with what he has categorised in ethical terms as "bad". How then does psychic man resolve this apparent contradiction? - He

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accuses the pneumatic man as regarding the world as "bad". The Gnostic's unwillingness to engage with matter is branded as escapism or indifferentism. The psychic man therefore becomes a kind of hero who is willing to soil his hands for the good of mankind while the Gnostic sits on the sidelines. Hence the oft-repeated but quite erroneous statement that Gnostics regard matter as evil. The terminology is psychic man's own; it is irrelevant to pneumatic man's fundamental concerns. For the Gnostic, such ethical patterns are an illusion. The only priority of the material sphere is survival and self-perpetuation. True Knowledge is in fact an end in itself. Those who seek it can have no other genuine motivation other than that it is in their nature to do so. Such is the nature of the Spiritual.

46. Transcendence of this world is not open to all. It derives from a perspective rather than an experience. Hence the quest for an induced enlightenment is fruitless.

47. The religions assume that all human beings are in one way or another capable of access to the transcendent entity at the heart of their belief-system, and various procedures are proposed, cultic or ethical, to assist the believer in gaining access. The truth is that the "Knowers" have already gained access to - indeed were never apart from - the transcendent entity of the Gnosis, while those without "Knowledge" never will gain access. This makes sacraments, cultic organisations or ethical injunctions useless. Those varieties of religion which pursue such practices do so because they confuse the Gnosis with proprioceptive awareness and aim to promote the "happiness" and "success" of the body-mind entity.

48. In the human sphere, intuition of pure "divine" consciousness may reside in the mind of man, but is always co-mingled and confused with, and corrupted by other mental faculties which may be grouped under the heading of "intelligence." True intuition is an awareness which, as an aspect of consciousness, is an end in itself; intelligence is a proprioceptive mental faculty which, although divine in origin, is usually directed towards matter and subject to the direction of carnal will. If intelligence is to be directed or re-directed towards true consciousness, there must first be a true perception. This perception is a gift (or "grace") solely possessed by the spiritual man.

49. The will's subject dreams of its successful domination of its environment. "God" is self-interest in its most successful form imaginable - "success" being defined by longevity and domination. He is immortal and omnipotent, and promises power and eternal life to his worshipers. He is essentially the will to power. Ialdabaoth is a nightmare of proprioceptive matter.

50. History is irrelevant to Life. It is an empty promise that events are significant and each human life is a progression which can be altered by petitioning an all-powerful God. Because it reveals the true meaninglessness of supposedly salvific events, the Gnostic revelation will always meet with violent hostility.

51. The return of the Spiritual to their source is not an "election", nor is it the result of some accumulated "merit". The Spiritual are what they have been and always will be without beginning and without end. Their essential nature is not something created

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from nothing, but rather an emanation from the Ultimate. Their physical prison has enclosed them by accident.

52. Sophia does not promote the "success" of a physical organism favoured by her - that is, its survival or the domination of its environment - even if her Logos does shape the material universe. Sophia is not some kind of "spirit" sent by a god to intervene in nature or to confer blessings on a favoured group. The laws of nature are inexorable, and beyond a shared perspective on the world, those in whom Faith, Hope and Love develop do not necessarily have any characteristics in common in terms of ethnicity, social class, intelligence, language, gender or age. And their ultimate detachment from such groupings inevitably attracts the hostility of corporate or individual Self, including those debased repositories of bogus revelation which are the established religions. The fanciful "truths" purveyed by them in their various schemes of education, together with the charades used to initiate new entrants - mostly juveniles who do not know better - can achieve nothing but to create an organised hypocrisy which at best nurtures gullibility and superstition, and at worst supports a power-hungry elite who derive their livelihood from the structures which they serve and by which they are served. True Faith walks away from such activities.

53. Gnostics may wish to celebrate their shared *nous* in myth. Since Nous is eternal, the stories will centre on "events" before time. But the true meaning of these stories and meditations cannot be fully apprehended by non-Gnostics.

54. The universe and events within it are without meaning. There is no good news to proclaim. An account of primeval events merely enables whoever has ears to hear it to derive some comfort from understanding his true predicament in this material universe.

55. Sophia's re-orientation towards the One brought about the reciprocal gesture and grace of the Gnosis. The Gnosis is the only emanation of the Transcendent Consciousness uncontaminated by will. It does not reside in any physical organ nor is it dependent on any individual material Self. Self is made aware of the Gnosis through Faith. In its incipient stage Faith may focus on the human construct "God", the personification of those aspirations within the lower end of the spectrum ranging upwards from Desire-Law to Hope-Love.

56. The Gnosis enters the mind of Man randomly as Truth, creating The Sons of Seth. In them, the power of Truth transforms Logos into Enlightenment.

57. The Logos brings into being systems and their related hierarchies and terminologies. But the True Reality - the One - is beyond, and can not be perceived by anything other than what is of Itself. These systems promote the belief that the Gnosis can somehow be willed through the use of certain techniques of meditation. But they simply end up promoting that Will's interests, which reside solely within the material domain. True enlightenment is not a willed process. The higher consciousness which is Gnosis cannot be "experienced" other than by one who is Gnostic.

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58. There is a division between those who are Gnostic and those who are not. Although the Gnostic is, because of his physical mantle, drawn into the preoccupations of carnality, he remains aloof from them. He sees the organism in context, and understands how its behaviour is determined by Matter and Will. He is therefore detached from this world, and perceives its dictates as stemming from a lower order of reality. He listens and observes, but hears no message and sees no reason which will enable him to be reconciled to it.

59. No-one can "opt into" the Gnosis. Gnostics are not adherents of a religion. "Gnostic" is a description of a person's nature. This can not be identified by any external characteristics. Gnostics cannot therefore form any identifiable group in society. The only sign of a Gnostic is recognition of the fundamental inconsequentiality of the material order.

60. There is an eternal non-material Being whose nature is detached and uninvolved with matter. But a part of the non-material Being's totality has become scattered and temporarily detained by matter as the result of an accident. That which shares the nature of the non-material Being is capable of becoming at one with the Gnosis. This is not the work of a mental faculty: it is independent of the material universe. It does not reside in a body: it resides in a mind. But it can only reside in that part of a mind which is "selfless", detached from "worldly" considerations. This state of mind is characterised by a disinterested and altruistic recognition of the existence and needs of the independent "other". The mind may then become aware of the existence of a Truth beyond itself, the "Gnosis". Gnosis creates its own potential to be known only in the minds of those who share the nature of the non-material Being. Those who possess the potential for becoming at one with the Gnosis do so by their very nature throughout their lives and are, by dint of this possession, aliens or strangers in this world.

61. The Carnal seek to bring order into Matter. This is an expression of Will. It is only when this purely carnal order-in-matter is measured over against the non-material realm by Conscience that morality is born. Dissatisfaction with things as they are in the material sphere is codified by the Carnal into Law. The Gnosis, on the other hand, is characterised by a preoccupation with the existence of a Truth beyond the self. Gnostics show their true natures by detachment from carnality and a compassion for those who suffer false hope about the possibilities of this world.

62. The Gnosis, although ultimately its higher source, is not simply consciousness. Consciousness dreams of its successful domination of its environment. "God" is self-interest in its most successful form imaginable - "success" being defined by longevity and domination. He is immortal and omnipotent, and promises power and eternal life to his worshippers. He is essentially the will to power.

63. Does the Gnosis enter the organism at its conception, or later, at some critical stage of its development? Since the Gnosis is not dependent on the existence of the organism, the former cannot be the case. Nor can material circumstances dictate the descent of the Gnosis. And so the latter is not true. The alighting of the Gnosis is purely random, and may occur at any stage in the life-cycle of the organism - the only condition being that

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for whatever reason the receiving organism is surviving on the mental periphery of the *cosmos*. (If this is not the case, the Gnosis will be driven away even before it has had time to settle.) It therefore follows that, depending on his cognitive development at the time, the Gnostic may remember the point in time when the Gnosis came.

64. Language is a high-level cognitive activity which deals with the interface between Mind and "the World", and it expresses our knowledge and understanding of the world. It assists us in ordering our perceptions and, ultimately, of the things perceived. But the world, our senses and our brains are all the creation of Ialdabaoth. Language is therefore a participation in his ordering activity. His is the Logos. The Spiritual person's apprehension of the Ultimate Truth is not a cognitive function; in the Gnosis like is simply drawn to like. Human language can not adequately express this spiritual truth because it is "of the World"; those who know the Truth are iconoclastic; they undermine existing ideas and images to point beyond them, but there is no identifiable technique to this. Language is primarily Ialdabaoth's, but if for whatever reason we decide to express in language genuine spiritual truth we must accept that it will suffer debasement. This debasement can be seen even in the use of pronouns. In writing about the Ultimate Truth ("the One") it is necessary to avoid using personal pronouns at all, because they lead to idolatry, as does all language. It is also necessary to avoid using the term "Father", and even the term "God" in referring to the One. Only the Gnosis is "of the One". We rely, however, on the Logos to express this.

65. Are we to suppose that, for the Gnostic, beyond meaningless suffering only oblivion awaits? For the body and its consciousness, or proprioceptive awareness, the answer is "Yes"; but for those who share in authentic consciousness the truth is more complex. The Gnosis is conscious of the body-mind being aware of itself. In other words, it is a level of consciousness above and beyond proprioceptive awareness. This consciousness is also aware of the fact of the death of the body-mind and that its proprioceptive awareness will cease. This consciousness, or "Gnosis", does not need to be conscious *of* anything; it is an end in itself. It does not need space or time; it can exist without either. It is therefore eternal and infinite. (It is not, however, ubiquitous, since there are places - such as inanimate matter - where the higher consciousness is not.) Indwelling the mind-body vortex of some men, the Gnosis is not subject to death. When the vortex dissolves, the Gnosis migrates randomly to another "self", retaining an imprint of its former dwelling. This imprint can be passed on from one self to another by means of carnal reproduction. In other words, psychic men (but not the carnal) have ancestors who were indwelt by the Gnosis - that is, ancestors who were among the Spiritual.

66. Gnosticism is not a religion. Religions generally assume that all human beings are in one way or another capable of access to the transcendent entity at the heart of their belief-system, and various procedures are proposed, cultic or ethical, to assist the believer in gaining access. The Gnostic, however, has already gained access to - indeed was never apart from - the transcendent entity of the Gnosis, while those without never will gain access. This makes sacraments, cultic organisation or ethical injunction useless. That "gnosticism" which introduces such practices does so because it confuses the Gnosis with proprioceptive awareness and has an implicit or explicit aim to be "life-enhancing" - that is, promoting the "happiness" and "success" of the body-mind entity.

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67. The Gnosis is not static and inert. As a dynamic entity it is affected for ever by its "place" of residence while remaining unaffected by physicality and its demands. Something of the spiritual mind of the host lives forever as part of the non-material Being's immortal and eternal totality. Meanwhile, an heroic - and in worldly terms, ultimately hopeless - struggle continues against the forces of carnality both within and without. Yet transcending all is the Gnosis, which leads us to the One called "Father" by the Gnosis made Word.

68. The Gnosis is not to be confused with "consciousness", the latter being the function whereby matter may be aware of itself. Howbeit consciousness is itself a mysterious phenomenon; it is different in nature to the Gnosis. Consciousness is a process with an end in mind: to sustain the continuity of a material object in its current form by monitoring its surroundings and making changes compatible with the survival of its own perceived integrity. This is done by a series of incredibly complex chemical interactions. It is, indeed, the only material function which is autonomous, transcending the evolutionary process of natural selection. Its motive force may be identified as "will", and it is this "will" which provides the only link between matter and consciousness. For authentic consciousness, however, the will is unnecessary, because the primary allegiance of the will is to matter.

69. If the Logos directs itself towards Sophia and is subject to the direction of the Gnosis, Consciousness directs itself towards Matter and is subject to the direction of Will.

70. It is on the perimeter of the sustaining environment that the Gnosis settles. Those who have the least success in the mainstream physical and social environment are in fact the saviours of *homo sapiens*. The truest sacrifice is that of the Spiritual, who suffer in their own flesh the consequences of their knowledge of the designs of the Powers: the hostility of the Powers towards them.

71. The evolution of *homo sapiens* into a species with a mental capacity far beyond that of other species, and beyond its own survival needs, came about as a result of the Gnosis. Consciousness is a faculty which owes its genesis to the presence of the spiritual in matter. It is not identical with the Gnosis; the former is a consequence of the presence of the latter, since the fruit of the Gnosis is detachment from material circumstances. It is the stepping-out-of this physicality which resulted in the growth of cerebral material. Why did the Gnosis concentrate itself in *homo sapiens*? Certain members of the species had been pushed to the perimeter of the sustaining environment, and it was here that the Gnosis settled. It has followed this pattern ever since. Those who have the least success in the mainstream physical and social environment are in fact the saviours of the species.

72. The primary allegiance of the will is to matter. It was only when a proprioceptive element was introduced into matter that we had what might be termed the "fall" into time and the pointless interplay between will and matter. This is sinister to the extent it subverts pure consciousness's contemplation of itself. Proprioceptive matter - the living organism - is aware in its more complex manifestations that the will has a vital role in

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survival. Will is a genuine mystery as a vital constituent of the higher forms of animate matter, and a universal phenomenon which transcends its individual manifestations. This phenomenon may be personified as the demiurge "Ialdabaoth", also known as "Saklas" and "Samael". The will to power manifests itself in hierarchies, systems, strange terminologies, and all the paraphernalia which gives the pilgrim cause to stumble.

73. Intimation of the spiritual realm is innate only in those who share its nature. The true centre of their being resides elsewhere. This is both their peace and their restlessness, their stillness and their urge.

74. What is the nature of the interaction between the Gnosis and animate matter? The elements of Matter, Will and Consciousness, exist in different proportions in individual organisms. The ratio of juxtaposition will be species-determined in "lower" forms of life. In the "higher" forms of life such as human beings, the ratio appears to vary. There are in fact three categories of human being: the hylic, the psychic and the pneumatic. In carnal (or hylic) persons matter is dominant. This dominance manifests itself in a preoccupation with the consumption necessary to maintenance of material integrity. In psychic persons the will to power is dominant. The impulse to gain control over the environment of survival may lead to forms of action which are socially very useful, such as servicing and maintaining social organisms, or investing energy and ingenuity into technical innovation. When these benefit other individual organisms such actions will win general approbation, and may be described as "good", or "right", or what "should" be done. On the other hand, the hylic person's preoccupation with a more limited self-interest which cuts across such beneficial actions may be described as "bad", or "wrong", or what "ought not" to be done. Such ethical language is often legitimised by reference to that "God" who is the supreme manifestation of the will to power. "Good" is determined by the group. Definitions are suspended for those outside the group. This is what we would expect of a survival-mechanism, and may be observed in all species. In human beings the process is less obvious for two related reasons. Firstly, social leaders are not exclusively biologically determined. Human leaders will have a strong will to power, but need to legitimise their dominance. They will therefore appeal to ethics to justify their actions. But such an appeal is useless if the ethical categories are not perceived as absolute and universally applicable. The leader will therefore attempt to affirm that actions are not just for this good of his own group, but for "the good of mankind". It will be seen, therefore, that ethical justification is fundamental to the activity of psychic man. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should apply ethical categories to actions which he finds threatening or which he cannot understand.

75. Those who share in the Gnosis show their true natures by detachment from carnality and a compassion for those who suffer false hope about the possibilities of this world. A pale reflection of this is found in all human beings, whether Gnostic or not, in the form of Conscience.

76. How can the brain pursue what is beyond thought when its very purpose is to think? Only that which is outside the brain can apprehend that which is beyond thought. Such is the Gnosis, which knows what is to be known because the knower is the known.

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77. Sophia made Self.
Self's shadow was Matter.
Sophia gave it Logos,
And their creature Man, Nomos.
Sophia turned again,
Giving men Conscience,
To make Faith from Will,
Hope from Desire,
And from Nomos, Love.

78. Sophia's return to the One elicits the Gnosis.
The Gnosis enters some men.
Some minds experience the Gnosis:
They "know" something beyond
The material world of the self,
And perceive the Powers at work
Within their environment.
The minds which experience the Gnosis
Feel impelled to seek a communion
Which assists in the liberation
And re-union of the All
Of which they are a part.
In Gnostics Self will dissolve forever
As they surrender to the Gnosis.
Nomos and Logos, and Conscience,
Will return to Sophia.
Matter will end.
Sophia and the Gnosis will return to the All.

79. When Sophia turned,
The One sent the Gnosis,
Which dwells in some men.
They hasten the End.

80. Receive these messages
From my true self to our true self.
This is the Gnosis made Word.
Those who know
Will recognise what they know:
Argument is vain.
Come forth those who share the Gnosis!
Gather together, people of insight!
Celebrate here with me
What we always have shared,
That we may enjoy it together
At our Source, in greater measure, to all eternity.

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THE TESTAMENT OF VALENTINE

1. The world is a place of wounds. Wounds to the spirit bleed venom in the soul. Staunch the flow of venom into a poisoned world.
2. Pay heed to the words of those whom men call "Saviour" and "Enlightened" - provided that they help you towards liberation. But beware the Powers. Their subtlety enables them to invade every corner of the universe, and turn even the most opulent of gifts into an engine of slavery.
3. Beware those who claim detachment, but are in fact disaffected. Spurned lovers of the world, they gladly return to her arms if beckoned.
4. Beware answers. Beware guides. Beware the Powers, whose gifts are snares. Beware the leaders of men. Beware schemes and systems. Beware rewards and punishments. Beware the world.
5. Behold the idiot who leads men to the Truth! Behold the man of intellect who beckons to his sty!
6. Suffer much, say little, understand most.
7. The will to power manifests itself in hierarchies, systems, strange terminologies, and all the paraphernalia which gives the pilgrim cause to stumble. Beware such "gnosis" and its occult science.
8. The way to salvation is through transcendence of the self. This may be through thought or action. Transcend the will to power and thus find freedom.
9. In your heart is a hungry worm that grows until your heart is gone, then feeds upon itself. Trust what your heart tells you, yet deny it. Sharpen your wit, then throw it away. Exercise your mind, then let it be at rest. Welcome the paradox, but do not worship it. Our world was made by Samael. We name the parts with the tongue he gave. His is the Word, but his is not the Truth.
10. Understanding is obscured by the delirium brought on by wealth, power, or worldly beauty. Those most committed to the illusion, and who fail to grasp the true nature of things, succeed in the eyes of the world. Those who sit in judgment always find for themselves. Seek the spiritual man, therefore, among those whom the world condemns. The man who turns his back on the rewards of this world must also bare it to stripes.
11. Bend beneath the blows of the Powers, and so avoid hurt.
12. You sift the dust for tiny nuggets of truth. But you stare at the ground because you walk on all fours. Raise your head above the earth and look to the stars, where you may contemplate the Wisdom already known to you.

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13. Forgive! - know the cause of injurious deeds, or your heart will be a worm that feeds upon itself.

14. Do not suppose that spiritual status is in any way related to worldly accomplishments. Behold the crippled idiot who leads men to the Truth! Behold the man of intellect and prowess who uses the gifts of nature to extend his sty!

15. There are those who deny the gods, but few can escape the Powers. Refusing to enter the labyrinth of deception, they bivouac in the vestibule. Rejecting the greater gods of the Temple, they fall prey to the meaner gods of the hearth. Clear the grime from the window and gaze on the world outside.

16. Let the mind of carnal man be leavened by the powers-that-be to feed the self. We instead share the simple fare of detachment as we journey together to the Truth.

17. Be compassionate. To understand folly is to forgive.

18. These are not "revelations". These are rather messages from my true self to my true self witnessed by the rest of the world. They are Gnosis made Word, and the waters that are drawn from this well will quench the thirst of many.

19. Sacrifice on the altar of matter is in vain. Yet perhaps Sophia has a place for which her carnal offspring are destined.

20. The Gnostic will not run with the herd or the pack; the wrath of the Archons is therefore inflamed.

21. Those who know say least. But for those who share in the nature of the One there is eternity. "Show us the One who brings freedom", you demand. I can not. The One finds a path.

22. The spirit suffers in flesh the enmity of the Powers. Our souls cry out at injury to the flesh, but these injuries dissolve with the flesh that gave them birth. None are victims of "evil". All are victims of the world.

23. The fool Creates patterns of cause and effect - the fat are blessed, the lean are cursed - then traces all to "God". But the fat are not praiseworthy; the lean are not to blame.

24. When Ialdabaoth made the cannibal coil within eternity, it was on the basis of laws neither right nor wrong.

25. Without map, without scrip, without shoes, some arrive before they set out. The land is theirs; they are the kingdom. The One can only be perceived by those who share by their very natures in the transcendent Reality.

26. All things rise from and fall into the dust, with a beauty that cannot be seized.

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27. Decay is part and parcel of the material world: ideas decay; beliefs decay. These things do not matter to the Spiritual; neither does it matter if, over aeons of time, the Truth is buried. Indeed, at times the Truth should be prepared for burial.

28. Wisdom can never be seen by all; the quest is in vain.

29. The One can only be perceived by those who share by their very natures in the transcendent Reality.

30. The Truth is not to be discovered through any personal relationship - for the root of all bonding of separates is carnal. Only pure Knowledge saves: the knowledge that knows itself by itself, uncontaminated by affection.

31. There is no appeal to reason here; there is only an appeal to knowledge. Those who know will recognise what they know: argument is unnecessary.

32. The issue is freedom. "Show us the One who brings freedom", you demand. I can not. Only the One knows the One. The One trapped in flesh seeks liberation, and finds a path. The slave dreams of becoming the master. Yet the master is also a slave. The true goal is to transcend the will to power and so find freedom.

33. For the spiritual man "salvation" is not an issue. The spark can never be lost, though the whole world fall back into confusion. The issue is liberation. The means of liberation is knowledge.

34. Can the unborn child picture its birth? Can the Spiritual imagine the freedom which will be theirs?

35. No "God" will release his slaves. His chains are subtle. They are forged with fear. And the anger of his priests is unbounded against those who will not accept his manacles. For the priest is a slave who dreams himself master; awake from all dreams and you will be free.

36. Through knowledge, the spiritual man will avoid that which makes thicken the prison walls. And he will turn his gaze to the window, and the stars beyond, and see what his captors, to their perpetual rage, will never see.

37. Spurning the vows of the devotee, they make their pledge to wealth, family and status. They hear the roar of the beast and serve it. We are called to slay it, and to press on to the gate that leads to Life.

38. Ialdabaoth has a multitude of colours, and can present foliage according to his desire. And yet he is a stump. His branches decay, his fruit is rotten.

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39. Can all men be saved? - The carnal and the psychic will always worship the Archons. (The spiritual man may also be seduced along this path). These powers, including the demiurge, are but the vices of such men elevated to a principle.

40. You entertain a doubt that the alleged powers and the supposed path of liberation exist only in the mind. How can this be so? If the mind of man is a product of nature, is it not impressed with the shape of things from outside itself? If the powers exist in the mind of man, then they were put there by the powers. If the path of liberation leads beyond the mind, is it not a liberation from the powers? Admire the Powers, and spurn them. Never underestimate them: their vigour is real.

41. The Carnal, ever limited by their nature, see only idols that may gratify their manifold needs.

42. The lips of the messenger are frozen in stone.

43. The bellies of the Carnal need leavened bread.

44. Those most committed to the illusion, and who fail to grasp the true nature of things, succeed in the eyes of the world.

45. That which overturns matter is seen as a destroyer by those in thrall to the Powers.

46. Though there is more than one path, there is only one goal: transcendence of "self".

47. The Spiritual meets enlightenment as logos, the Psychic as mythos.

48. To leave the womb is to escape a grave. To abandon security is to leave death behind.

49. The slave dreams of becoming the master. Yet the true goal is to transcend the will to power and so find freedom.

50. The Gnostic "revelation" is provisional - a celebration of the riches of the Truth in currency whose value fluctuates, and much of which is base metal. No-one has a monopoly which it comes to the manner in which the truth is expressed.

51. The three human kinds exist because of the way that the universe has come about, and not by election.

52. Gems of Truth may be lodged in poor settings.

53. Your "good" is self-serving, your "morality" an instrument of prey.

54. The Carnal is the world. The Psychic perceives a world. The Spiritual knows a prison.

55. Being order in matter, Ialdabaoth's is the Word.

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56. Notions of "good" are corrupted by consideration of the provisional, the transitory, the self-serving. Yet there is a kind of "good". That which tends towards the One is "good" because it tends to what is real.

57. To the tribes the spiritual is of no account; to the leaders he is invisible. The virtue of the spiritual man is detachment, and this leaves no mark for the eyes of the world to behold. The spiritual man does not pursue wealth, so all the world sees is poverty. The spiritual man does not pursue power, so all the world sees is weakness. The spiritual man does not seek fullness, so the world despises an empty thing.

58. The spirit is trapped in this world, and the flesh demands belonging. And so the spiritual man chooses his place of belonging on the grounds of compassion.

59. There are three paths to the One: the path of action, the path of devotion, and the path of knowledge, but the surest of these is the path of knowledge. Yet none is strong against idolatry.

60. Our detractors accuse us of negativity, of pessimism, of denial. So be it. It is they who refuse to confront the dissatisfaction that eats at their hearts like a hungry worm.

61. The benighted may not see the light, because their eyes have closed in the darkness. And yet to those whose eyes are pierced by the light he gives power to become sons of light: the flame already in them grows stronger.

62. Where, then, is healing to be found? The Pneuma is present in the world - not only in some men, but in the order of events. But to the world, its order is disorder.

63. To side with the Demiurge is to side with order. A tyrant is benevolent as long as we enjoy his favour. But the supporter of a tyrant should always be ready to see himself put to death for the sake of order.

64. Souls are not hedged by race or by class, by gender or by age; Faith-Wisdom does not spring from brain or tongue.

65. The material world is real enough, but that reality is hierarchical. That is, matter is not evil - simply inferior.

66. The Truth, like the royal state, does not reside in the flesh of one person. "The king is dead. Long live the king!"

67. The criminal and victim are one. The judge must select by caprice, then assert a justice beyond reproach. But the fat are not worthy of praise nor the lean of blame. The righteous men slain by the oppressor even as they offer sacrifice, or the pilgrims crushed by the falling tower at the holy place - they do not receive their just desert.

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68. The world is a place of deception. This deception is promoted by the angels of Ialdabaoth and their servants, and is expressed in superstitious practices: idols and altars and temples and sacrifices and libations to the Powers. Religious language itself may be a stumbling-block in the path of Truth: thus one who hears the word "God" does not perceive what is correct, but perceives deception. It is necessary to turn away from deception in order to be free of the powers; the Spiritual are able to overcome deception with Truth. What do you perceive the emptiness with? Perhaps you apprehend it with the Truth within - if there is Truth within. If, on the other hand, there is no Truth within, then you only see and feel what your flesh and its psychic servant likes or loathes.

69. That which overturns matter is seen as a destroyer by those in thrall to the Powers.

70. The Carnal, ever limited by their nature, see only idols that may gratify their manifold needs.

71. The true centre of our being resides elsewhere. This is both our peace and our restlessness, our stillness and our urge.

72. The spark can never be lost, though the whole world fall back into confusion.

73. The impulse to order is genuinely divine; the impulse to worship order is not.

74. The powers do not change men for the better. They simply confirm them in their corruption. Those who worship the powers worship their own carnal natures and are controlled entirely by instinct.

75. The tyrant is himself a prisoner.

76. The One knows the One. What need has the One to pray? Our wills attend on the One; what need have we to pray?

77. Despair of the world brings hope.

78. Will is the fundamental principle of all independent life.

79. The Psychic may choose the Light, and because this choice transcended nature, something may be reborn.

80. Enlightenment is the gift of the few to the many.

81. Though there is more than one path, there is only one goal: transcendence of "self".

82. Nothing can come between the Spiritual and eventual bliss.

83. To the tribes the spiritual is of no account; to the leaders he is invisible.

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84. Zeal in reform is commendable; holy war is good. But this is not our way, for we are the ultimate subversive.

85. Some ages may sink into a depravity which guarantees their eventual extinction in the way of all flesh.

86. As regards prayer: what need have those whose wills attend on the One to ask for anything?

87. It is those most committed to the illusion who succeed in the eyes of the world. It is those who succeed in the eyes of the world who fail to grasp the true nature of things.

88. There is one System, one illusion. It has a demonic beauty, and torments us.

89. The fool Creates patterns of cause and effect - the fat are blessed, the lean are cursed - then traces all to "God". God is not supreme. Miracles do not happen. This is because matter came into being before God, and God himself cannot change the iron laws of the material universe. Because he does not possess the ultimate spiritual supremacy, he is unable to "save" us.

90. A mediator may take a costly gift to appease a tyrant and win favours from him. To suppose that God is such a ruler is a notion unworthy of God or of His true worshippers, and will attract only those intent on suing the Deity for favours. There are always those who seek to make a profession of mediation. Entry to the Kingdom by those who are its citizens needs no such mediation and therefore no priesthood.

91. Ialdabaoth is not the ultimate authority. But being order in matter, his is the Word.

92. None are victims of something called "evil". All are victims of the way the world is - the inexorable laws of nature. Events may be purgatives for the purification of Spirit, but pain refines the gold; it does not place it in the heart.

93. True consciousness is a cross to bear: there is no sense of moral superiority to motivate; there is no covenant with a personal god to inspire; and there is no divine providence to comfort. Consciousness is an end in itself.

94. In the flesh the gap between saint and sinner is imperceptible. "God" must base his selection on caprice, then assert a justice beyond argument and reproach. Such is the way of the tyrant Ialdabaoth, himself the prisoner of iron laws.

95. The Spiritual can not be identified by any physical, mental or moral characteristics. And because the world is irredeemable, there is no point in forming an organisation which promotes faith. There can be no scripture, no sacrifice, and no priesthood.

96. Anything experienced is, by its nature, less than true reality. The enlightened possess true perspective as part of their nature - it cannot be acquired by effort or by manipulation of the cognitive, emotive or sensory environment.

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97. If the existence of neither Revealer nor Revealed can be recognised as authorities higher than the allegedly "supreme" Ialdabaoth, then both, dimly perceived, have to be imported into the deity. But their subjection makes idols of them.

98. There are those who say, "We have the keys to salvation. Salvation is easy. Simply do as we say!" There are those who say, "You enjoy a worldly prosperity. That in itself is a sign of grace. Come and join our ranks, and add to that the assurance of salvation!" There are those who say, "Salvation is an amusing game that adds spice to our comfortable lives. Come and join us: realise your full potential!" How subtle and persuasive are the powers! - not the dumb idols we habitually suppose them to be!

99. Those who are supposed to be guardians of spiritual matters - the scribes, the teachers, the priests - are no less open to corruption than the infidels. Only the gift of suffering strips such corruption away and raises head and voice above the edge of the prison wall.

100. The comfort of rites is a comfort of sleep, where materiality is dreamed as order and justice.

101. People may use a mediator in their dealings with God, but to do so presupposes that there are two classes of human beings, one of which is closer to God.

102. If you pray to God, then it is Ialdabaoth; if he comes to your aid then it is Saklas.

103. Knowledge is not the gift of a just god. It is that which offers refuge from an unjust Demiurge, who disposes of his illusory riches capriciously, and leads the recipients to ignorance and eternal night.

104. "Show us the One who gives liberation", you demand. I can not. Only the One knows the One. The One trapped in the mind of flesh seeks liberation, and finds a path. Knowledge is not a gift. It is the right and the burden of those imprisoned yet already free.

105. We say "Not this" and "Not that", and dissatisfaction eats at your heart like a hungry worm.

106. The One is unnamed and ineffable, the source of all being.

107. The One is pure. He does not strive, since He lacks nothing. He is unnamed, and there is none for whom He yearns.

108. The Carnal and the Psychic will always worship the Powers, for they are their vices raised to a principle. The carnal man who sacrifices his own self for his family or friends does a noble thing, even if he is acting under instinct. This instinct is indeed a higher impulse than the drive to self-preservation. There is some sense in which nature is

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refined by it. It creates a window in matter for the Fullness to be revealed. But the carnal man himself is not "saved" by sacrifice. He has no "self" to save.

109. The Eternal Being's fullness is by nature apart from matter, but has become widely scattered and briefly detained in the world because of an accident.

110. Purity was divided; thus "He" became "they".

111. The One in us perceives beyond mortal ken; this is "Gnosis".

112. From the One came the All. Only the One knows the One. And those who seek proof of the One need only to acknowledge their yearning.

113. The utterances of the spiritual are the Word of the One.

114. Transcendence of this world is not an experience open to all. Wisdom derives from a perspective rather than an experience. Hence the quest for induced enlightenment is fruitless.

115. For true Gnostics there is no providence. The Spiritual are trapped and are returning through the aeons by paths of liberation which are difficult, and known only by themselves. Yet liberation is assured.

116. May the One reach out to the knowledge within you and draw you to the ultimate goal.

117. The True Reality is beyond us. This One can not be perceived by anything other than the One. The One can only ever be described in terms of the One.

118. The material world is real enough, but that reality is hierarchical. That is, matter is not evil - simply inferior. This perspective on the material world is related to an insight into the way things have come to be as they are.

119. Myth must negate itself in the telling if idols are not to be engendered.

120. There are no sacraments. "Salvation" is in knowledge, a knowledge that cannot be conferred.

121. In the first phase survival is all. Ruled by the Powers, whom we name as gods, we seek to bend them our will by bribes and flattery, by submission or intimidation. Then we create patterns of cause and effect. Gratification is reward, denial is punishment: the fat are blessed, the lean are cursed. And we trace all causes to one cause, whom we call "God". Soon we see that the fat are not praiseworthy nor the lean worthy of blame. So our patterns become more tenuous: our ancestors were righteous or sinners, or we ourselves in a previous life. But this rightly offends a sense of justice, and so we find a second source for evil, or propose that god's ways are inscrutable to men. And so we wait in vain for the overcoming of the one, or the revelation of the other.

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122. Nomos is not a cosmic force: human behaviour is affected by but cannot affect the laws of nature.

123. Suffering is not caused by transgression, and death cannot be overcome by obedience to law.

124. It is not possible for anyone to state the destiny of humankind beyond death. But because God is eternal, that destiny too is eternal, for true mankind is in the mind of God. Those who seek the truth about their destiny in order to fulfill it join their wills with the Will of God and may therefore participate in the eternity of the Divine Nature.

125. The principle which guides us has no beginning and no end. We are heirs to eternal Truth and Life, and we are trustees of the Way.

126. If the Powers exist in the mind, were they not put there by the Powers? The path that leads beyond is a liberation.

127. The universe and events within it, are without meaning. There is no good news to proclaim. An account of primeval events merely enables whoever has ears to hear it to derive some comfort from understanding their true predicament in this material universe.

128. None are victims of something called "evil". The Petrites seek to exonerate their God by blaming man. But when Jehovah manufactured this cannibal coil within eternity, he made it on the basis of laws which had nothing to do with right or wrong. All are victims of the way the world is - the inexorable laws of nature.

129. It would be nonsense to say that the carnal man is "saved" by sacrifice. He has no "self" to save.

130. Some ages may strive towards understanding in the manner of the animate man. Such cultures may become transfused with enlightenment, but such enlightenment is the gift of the few to the many.

131. The enemy is "in here" as well as "out there". Mark well how the Powers are at work in our hearts. Admire them while spurning them. Never underestimate them: their strength is armed with cunning. Yet bend beneath their blows, and so avoid hurt.

132. The most primitive religion seeks the renewal of nature by fertility. The more advanced religion seeks the renewal of society by justice. The highest religion seeks the transcendence of matter by Spirit.

133. If we cling to these notions of "good" and "justice" we merely increase the suffering of the self. Leave good and evil behind with the self, and go to where no thing exists, and yet All is.

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134. There is a question which you dare not ask because you know it is foolish. Let me frame it for you: "Where is God to be found?" It has been answered many a time by the sages, but heard only by fools. God is within ourselves.

135. My aim is not to establish systems. My aim is to call forth those who share the Gnosis, to summon the invisible community of knowledge and insight. I invite all the Spiritual to celebrate here with me the Consciousness which we always have shared, and always will, that we may enjoy it together at our Source in greater measure to all eternity.

136. Struggle from the chrysalis of this world and take wing to regions which are intimated only by yearning. Those who seek proof of the One need only to acknowledge this yearning. Their despair is the harbinger of hope.

137. Marriage to the world is prostitution, in which the whore demands not only a fee, but a retainer for her services, and the husband is client to his own pimp.

138. Notions of "good" are corrupted by consideration of the provisional, the transitory, the self-serving. These weave the sticky thread of the illusory reality of this world. Morality may be an instrument of prey for the freedom of the self.

139. That which overturns the iron necessity of matter is seen as a Destroyer by those in thrall to the Powers. Men of knowledge, however, are able to read such events as signs which are effective to the healing of the Spirit.

140. The land is ours; we are the kingdom. What need have we of a king?

142. If we cling to notions of "good" and "justice" we merely increase the suffering of the self. Leave good and evil behind with the self, and go to where no thing exists, and yet All is.

143. Discourse with one's fellow spiritual beings brings the purest pleasure this world can offer: it is memories of youth and dreams of happy old age. For the spiritual man knows that one day, no matter how long the term of the sentence, and how protracted the torments inflicted by those who for a day lord it over him, he will return to his home in the One, to be lost - and found - forever in the bliss of union.

144. Three things are necessary to start out on the path to enlightenment: first, a culture; second, a religion; third, suffering. One is the soil, one the sunshine, the other the rain. But the seed comes only from the One.

145. We perceive, we analyse, we interpret, we mould, we subjugate reality to ourselves. And we say that the root of our systems is "God" - a god made in our own image. When we worship this image, we worship ourselves.

146. Where, then, is Truth to be found? I can only tell you - since I can only use words out of falsehood - where Truth is not to be found.

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147. The Eternal Being's Fullness is by nature apart from matter, but has become widely scattered and briefly detained in the world because of an accident. Those who share the Transcendent show their true natures by detachment from carnality and a compassion for those who suffer false hope about the possibilities of this world.

148. The spirit suffers in flesh the enmity of the Powers. Our souls cry out at injury to the flesh, but these injuries dissolve with the flesh that gave them birth. None are victims of "evil". All are victims of the world.

149. We hear the cries. Ialdabaoth is powerless to overcome the iron laws which lead to suffering and death.

150. The enlightened are so by nature.

151. Because the original Intuition cannot be denied or negated even under the sway of idolatry, the true end of intelligence is perceived deep within the heart. Because it cannot be denied, it expresses itself in human aesthetic activity. It is as a result of this that Beauty may be found within the material world.

152. The message is an expression of the spiritual man's sublimity. Worship of the messenger shows the psychic man's mendacity aided and abetted by the carnal man's stupidity.

153. Transcendence of this world is not an experience open to all. Wisdom or "enlightenment" derives from a perspective rather than an experience. Hence the quest for enlightenment as an experience induced by meditation is fruitless.

154. Though there is more than one path to the goal, the ultimate aim and end of all true Life is to transcend that illusion which we call the "self". The Way is not to give up one's own "self" in order simply to be absorbed into another "self". Religion offers many such illusory paths.

155. The benighted may not see the light, because their eyes have closed in the darkness.

156. Ialdabaoth believed himself to be supreme. In order to enlighten him (and simultaneously to chastise him) the Pleroma had to reveal the Spiritual to the Material, thereby causing some of the latter to be ensnared and temporarily abandoned by the return of the Immaculate to the Fullness.

157. We hear the cries. Ialdabaoth is powerless to overcome the iron laws which lead to suffering and death.

158. When Ialdabaoth manufactured this cannibal coil within eternity, he made it on the basis of laws which had nothing to do with right or wrong. None are victims of something called "evil". The criminal and victim are one. Such events may be purgatives for the purification of Spirit, but pain refines the gold; it does not place it in the heart.

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159. Only those who know are saved - not from pain, but from the deeper torment and waste of self-delusion.

160. The three kinds of men - carnal, animate and spiritual - exist because of the way that the universe has come about, and not as a result of some capricious act of election on the part of a demiurge.

161. If there is good news to be brought to the world concerning its redemption, its messenger must speak the same language as the world and be at home with its ways. The Gnostic, however, is a stranger and alien in the world. He can in no way proclaim a message which will enable his hearers to be reconciled to the world.

162. There is comfort, nevertheless, for the Spiritual - and only the Spiritual - in knowing (or rather, recognising, since he already knows) the cause of his exile, and the character of his home. Reclining in the walled garden of the gathered, the Teacher brings the purest pleasure of this world: shared memories of youth and dreams of labours past. The sage brings news of home.

163. Man is mortal, but Pistis-Sophia can never die; Man is weak, but Pistis-Sophia has mastery of all that endures.

164. Pistis-Sophia is not hedged by race or by class, by intelligence, language, gender or age.

165. The carnal man is part of the material world. The animate man perceives that he is part of this world and seeks either to alter or retain his position within it. To the spiritual man, however, the natural world is a prison. But the spark can never be lost, though the whole world fall back into confusion.

166. Carnal man is ignorant of the supreme being and will return to entirely to matter. Meanwhile, ever limited by his nature, he clings to idols that may gratify his manifold needs. For, in him matter is dominant. This dominance manifests itself in a preoccupation with the consumption necessary to maintain material integrity. His desire to bring order into matter is simply an expression of a desire to dominate it.

167. The Psychic may remove his self from the centre of things, and by so doing turn his back on the world.

168. Spiritual man has the capacity to know fully the supreme being, and his ultimate destiny is to enter into complete union with that supreme being; for spiritual man uniquely within the material universe shares the nature of the supreme being.

169. The prime virtue of the spiritual man is detachment, and this leaves no mark for the eyes of the world to behold.

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170. The difference between the Spiritual and the non-Spiritual is not simply one of belief: the non-Spiritual is actually incapable of grasping what the Spiritual is talking about.

171. The insights of the spiritual may be manifest as deeds, utterances or decrees. They may be enshrined in histories, codes or rituals. Their form may be poetic, philosophical or legislative. But beyond all these is the Word of enlightenment which comes from the One.

172. The Carnal seek investment, not beauty.

173. The Carnal Man is subject to Ialdabaoth's laws. The Spiritual Man has to overcome the world. But the Psychic Man strives actively to promote the principles on which the world was founded, and thereby compounds its suffering.

174. The animate man who re-orders his universe may become a means for the Light to shine in the darkness. And because this choice transcended nature, something of him may be saved for re-birth further along the path to the One.

175. The spiritual man meets enlightenment as truth and is helped towards liberation.

176. Those who sit in judgment always find for themselves. Seek the spiritual man, therefore, among those whom the world condemns.

177. For the spiritual man salvation is not an issue. The spark can never be lost, though the whole world fall back into confusion. The issue is liberation. The means of liberation is knowledge.

178. The animate man meets enlightenment as mythos. This myth may enable him to shape his life into the pattern of Truth, thus making way for the Logos.

179. Those who are heirs to the Truth are not recipients of some inscrutable "grace": they participate in Truth by nature. The question then is not the root of the Creator's caprice, but how the Heirs of Truth became trapped in matter.

180. The gifts given by the spiritual man are in themselves their own proof of value to the discriminating, the recipient possessed of inbred taste. The carnal are like the vulgar who need advice on how to furnish their house and are seeking investment rather than beauty.

181. It may be that in some way which is beyond our comprehension the sacrifice made by the carnal man creates a door (I speak metaphorically) in matter for the emissary of the Fullness to enter.

182. The insights of the spiritual may be focused into gems which attract the light, although these jewels may be lodged in poor settings.

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183. Those who are non-Knowers will get no further than the outer portals; those who Know are already within the inner sanctum.

184. Sophia entered the Void,
(The Void holds Matter;)
Sophia gave Nomos,
And he gave rise to Flesh.
Logos entered Matter,
(Matter holds the World;)
Faith turns it to Vision,
Vision transcends Sense.
Conscience entered Flesh,
(Flesh holds Man;)
Faith turns it to Agape,
Agape transcends Self.
Gnosis entered Men,
(Man holds the Gnostic;)
Gnosis will become the One.
The One transcends All.

185. The One willed Sophia.
Her descent produced Matter.
Her will made Nomos.
Nomos endowed some Matter with Sense.
Sense made Flesh; Flesh made Self.
Sophia's return to the One produced Logos,
And Logos the World.
Logos developed Sense into Conscience.
It raised Man from the beasts.
Those who join Sophia in her journey
In an act of Faith
Turn Logos into Vision,
And Conscience into Agape.

186. The Fullness, not matter, is widely scattered,
Detained in the world, not sent.
Some minds know beyond their self,
See forces at work in their flesh.
These knowing ones seek communion
To re-unite the All, their source.

187. O truly, you are blessed among the blessed,
If you have seen and heard and understood!

188. Our world was made by Ialdabaoth.
We name the parts
With the tongues he gave us.

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His is the Word.
And through it the Truth is debased.

189. Though there is more than one path
The aim and end of all true Life
Is to transcend that illusion
Which we call the "self".
(The Way is not
To give up one's own "self"
For another "self".)

190. The religions follow false paths.
The light needs no refraction
To show its glory.
But the benighted can not see it,
Because their eyes have closed
In the darkness. And yet
In those whose eyes are pierced by the light
The flame already flickering grows.
The psychic also may become a means
For the Light to shine:
When his choice transcends nature,
Something may be saved for rebirth
Along the path to the One.

191. We must go on
To what has no beginning
And has no end.
We are heirs to what is eternal,
And trustees of a deathless prize.

THE PRE-APOSTOLIC CONGREGATION OF JESUS GNOSIS

The real betrayer of Jesus was Peter.

Jesus was a Jewish reformer, the logical outcome of whose teachings found expression in the teachings of Gnostic which were suppressed by the "apostolic" heirs of Peter. Peter's prime interest was power - the power that derived from being the principal follower of the Messiah and one of the twelve leaders of a re-constituted Israel. Unfortunately for Peter's ambitions, Jesus himself never claimed to be the Messiah. And to make matters worse, Peter's efforts to promote Jesus as the Messiah only resulted in Jesus's ignominious death. Peter and his henchmen James and John therefore had to fabricate certain incidents to legitimise their claims: the Raising of Jairus's Daughter, the Transfiguration, the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden and, above all, the Resurrection. By such stories, attested by three male witnesses, they were able to perpetrate the fiction of a man who had power over death, whose divine authority was legitimised by Moses and Elijah, whose suffering and death was part of God's plan, and

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who was vindicated by being raised from death. The story of the betrayal by Judas (ie. Thomas) and the tales of the chastening of “doubting” Thomas (ie. Judas) were invented as a polemic against those disciples of the party of Judas the Twin (Greek “Didymos”, Aramaic “Thomas”) who dissented from Peter’s lies and misrepresentations.

What was Jesus’s real mission? His aim was to gather the true Israel. The True Israelites were those who, whatever their material circumstances, had existed as the Chosen in the mind of God since before the beginning of time. Wealth was no indicator of righteousness; neither was power. Ritual purity was no guarantee of salvation, or good works such as fasting and sacrifice. To the true God spoken of by Jesus they counted as nothing. The focus of this newly-gathered Israel was to be the Herodian Temple, “cleansed” by Jesus and his followers in preparation for the Jubilee of the 49th (7 X 7) anniversary of its founding. It was this “messianic” action – the making ready of the outer courts for those apparently “cursed” with uncleanness by Yahweh – which ultimately sealed his fate with the Jewish establishment. But what of Jesus’s suffering – what is its true meaning?

Jesus’s own sufferings were meaningless except insofar as they showed forth the meaninglessness of suffering in this world – for is not true suffering by definition pain without meaning? If you are in pain and you don’t know why, you suffer. If, on the other hand, there is a purpose to your pain, then the only issue is endurance. The one who cannot endure meaningful pain is a coward. The one who can endure it is brave. The one who endures pain himself in order to reduce the pain of others is a hero. Only a fool, however, would endure meaningless pain if it could be avoided. One who is God, or is privy to the mind of God, must know the meaning (as distinct from the scientific cause) of everything. He should also not be a fool. He therefore willingly embraces pain that has meaning while avoiding suffering. He is brave if the pain is great; he is a hero if his pain benefits others; but he is a fool if he wills suffering on himself. If the God-Man venerated by the Petrine Church suffered willingly, he is a fool – and God is a fool. If he heroically endures pain, he is great, but does not suffer. The Christ of the “apostles” can not suffer; in telling his tale, therefore, it is necessary to multiply the pains he endures: by such sorrows is his heroism augmented – a heroism befitting a king.

But is it possible to ascribe another kind of heroism to Jesus, a heroism that entails *genuine* suffering? When confronted by the meaningless pain of others we make choices as to how we react to it. If we choose not to ignore it we may ascribe a meaning to it in order to alleviate our own anguish in the face of another’s pain. One sure way of doing this is to see another’s pain as self-inflicted. The meaning of their pain is that they earned it; one way or another, by karma or by retribution, they brought it upon themselves. This “meaning” alleviates our pain in beholding suffering, even as it adds to the pain of those who suffer. Who can accept that they have deserved their pain? The sense of a lack of justice only adds to meaningless pain, to suffering. But the one who cares about the suffering of others – and why should he, unless he is a real hero? – empathises with meaningless pain. He rejects any “meaning” which denigrates the sufferer. He does what he can to reduce or palliate their meaningless pain. But in so doing – and this augments his heroism – he increases his own pain, his anguish in the face of suffering, by undermining the meaning which reduces his own suffering. Jesus took this stance,

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which needed to be expressed within the terms of his Judaism as an end to retribution, a denial of messianic expectation, and a new sacrifice prior to a destination-less exodus.

Engagement with the suffering of others without indulging in self-palliative interpretation of it, thereby bringing empathic suffering upon oneself, is a truly altruistic and selfless stance. (The ultimate test of its altruism is whether the person in solidarity with the suffering can also dis-engage when this is what is required to benefit the object of their concern. The person who is not altruistic will often refuse to disengage because it does not serve their hidden motive.) By declaring this to be the root of morality, expressed in the key word “agape” (“love”) and placing it firmly in a religious framework, Jesus and his prophetic forbears are more than suggesting that the path to fulfilment is trod only through the abandonment of self by immersion in the plight of the helpless. Morality is in fact the means by which the self is transcended, and it is at this point that the messages of Jesus and Gautama converge.

Within the terms of his contemporary Judaism, the stance adopted by the Galilean rabbi required three theological innovations which, if allowed to go unchallenged, would have destroyed the foundations of the religion whatever its sectarian manifestation, whether Pharisaic, Sadducaic or Essene. The first was to sever the connection between pain and sin by declaring a jubilee of divine forgiveness. I believe that the jubilee announced by Jesus was unconditional. (The seven-times-seventh anniversary of the foundation of Herod’s Temple probably provided the justification for this.) The condition of a required “repentance” was developed by the Petrine faction after Jesus’s death – after all, who is inclined to repent? And why? Presumably the inclination and inspiration to do so is dependent on the unfathomable grace of Jehovah. The jubilee would in fact have acknowledged that absolution of a debtor is not dependent on the debtor’s worthiness of absolution.

But if God forgives unconditionally, why is there pain in the world? – surely not because God is tardy, incompetent or sadistic in not lifting the sentence of a reprieved felon? If God is not to be decried, then the logical inference is that there is no inevitable cause-effect relationship between sin and apin; or, if there is, God – being all-powerful – can suspend it at will. A true God need not be a slave to his own justice. But if the unfortunate are not blameworthy, neither are the fortunate worthy of praise – a proposition intolerable to the Jewish orthodoxy of Jesus’s day.

Or course, only a person who had God’s very own authority in its fullness could declare such a jubilee – such as the Messiah. I do not believe that Jesus claimed such authority, or indeed that he claimed to be the Messiah (except in the imaginings of the Petrine faction). There is no record of such a claim in the Petrine Gospels apart from the suspect story of Peter’s declaration at Caesarea Philippi (after the equally suspect story of the Transfiguration), and Jesus nowhere uses the title of himself and his mission. This is because Jesus was not concerned with the issue of authority. He was driven to declare a jubilee as the theological expression of his over-riding sense of solidarity with the suffering – those supposedly cursed by God, and therefore excluded from the community by their inability to fulfil the obligations of the ritual law.

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So, if Jesus's pains were embraced deliberately as part of a divine plan can it be said that the Messiah proclaimed by Peter really suffered? Rather, just as the Israelites slaughtered their new-born livestock before leaving Egypt and following Moses into the desert, so the true followers of Jesus abandoned the Messianic dream that died with the death of Jesus. This is the true meaning of the *pascha* effected by the death of Jesus of Nazareth. If Jesus colluded with this "sacrifice" – and we have no way of knowing whether he did or not – then the priest who offered it was not Jesus himself, but Judas.

The essential message of the Nazarene was corrupted by his disciples, and in particular by those who called themselves "apostles"; and above all by Peter, James and John. Their assertion, motivated by a desire for power, that Jesus was the Jewish "Messiah" sealed his fate (which they blamed on Judas Iscariot), led to the intrusion of the miraculous, and created the entity known as "The Holy Spirit". These in turn have led to the creation of a "church" which has all the vices of the institutional Judaism which Jesus set out to reform by his words and actions. Now that Judaism and Christianity are drenched in the blood of the innocent they can be seen for what they are. The time has come for those who share with Jesus the nature of the Gnosis to declare the Truth in its pristine purity.

THE CONSOLAMENTUM

Gather at an agreed time in a private place.

Attend on all those gathered with an ewer of water and a bowl. Pour water upon the head, hands and feet of all present. During the cleansing recite the following: "Be thou washed in that which is without colour, odour and savour, and be cleansed thereby of all that is seen, smelled or tasted."

Dry all and say: "I wipe away all that is warm and all that shall be cold. May you be cleansed of all that has touched you and of all that you have touched."

Then rend the napkin and say: "The veil of our impurities shall be torn from top to bottom. The upper realm shall be opened for us in the lower realm, so that we might enter into the pure realm of Truth."

Remove all garments and say, "I put aside all worldly things."

A white cloth shall be tied around the temples and forehead. (For modesty's sake, the cloth shall hang to the ground.) The crown of the head shall have chrism poured over it with the words, "I seal you into knowledge, which is life." The Spiritual shall then dress in a white robe.

Take unleavened bread and place it on the table with these words: "May the seeds which grew secretly, and bore the fruit of knowledge, and were milled by the Powers, now be gathered into one bread."

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Then take unfermented juice of the grape and place it on the table, and say this: "May the fruit of the one vine, which was not fermented by worldly passion when trampled by the feet of the Powers, now be collected into one cup."

Then take olive oil, and pouring it over the bread, say: "May the fruit of the many branches of the tree of knowledge, which when crushed by the Powers brings forth light, imbue this loaf with healing and strength."

Consume the bread and wine with the words, "We are one bread" and, "We are one cup".

Conclude with the kiss of peace.

APOCRYPHON

Prologue

Four-times-four centuries out of view,
First born, then buried, then born anew,
Seth was my father, Eugnostos my groom,
Gongessos my midwife, Charaxio my tomb.
Through six-times-ten summers the dust-cloud of gold
Released at my re-birth has brightly rolled
Around the globe - the Nile's gift of reeds
Kindled by knowledge and sowing light's seeds.
Though delivered third-hand to your perception,
I am, nonetheless, the Immaculate Conception.

1.

The One is one. No one can be His peer.
Unseen, beyond all sight, and pure - beyond
Whatever can decay or be corrupt.
Think not 'divine', since He is more
Than 'God'; supreme above whatever is,
This Spirit needs no other lesser one,
For all that now exists exists in Him.
Since He does not persist in time, He needs
No life that throbs with temporality.
He is ineffable, entirely pure.
Not limited - what limit could extend? -
He is beyond all these. Not physical -
What body could enclose His boundless might?
None should ask, 'What is His quantity?'
Nor should enquire, 'What is His quality?'
To comprehend His kind. Not one among
A type, He is alone, unique, without

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A peer. For Him the ages do not run,
His Being unmeasured by the temporal.
Location in a place, implies a place
A time doled out. But He is without need:
There is no prior one from whom He may
Receive, and none for whom He yearns within
His perfect sphere of light. He contemplates
His purity alone, As Life itself,
No One but He gives life. Beyond Decay,
Beyond all striving's aim; before all speech,
And all that can be named. The head and heart
Of all that truly is, from Him all flows
To all if all exists apart from Him -
As His beneficence has said it should.

2.

He did not strive to overcome a lack,
Since He lacks nothing, perfect in His light.
For, limitless, who once could limit Him?
Unsearchable, what compass could aspire
To measure one who is immeasurable?
Invisible, no-one has gazed on Him.
He is eternal, since He always was.
Ineffable, no-one has read His mind.
He is unnamed, beyond all register,
His light unguaged, His state immaculate.
He is the One who contemplates Himself,
The source, the spring of living water, pure,
That issues into all the spirit realms.
In all directions He beholds His face
Within the pure reflection of this pool,
The living water rippling all around.
Yet self-perception - She who was conceived
Within the brilliance of His brightness - came
To birth, the primal potency before
The All, begotten from a pregnant mind.
She was the perfect Forethought of the All -
Her light shone like His light - the perfect power,
The image of the One who is unseen,
The virgin spirit perfect in all things.
She was His thought, His image; She became
The womb of everything, preceding her
Who thought a thought proceeding from herself
And not from anything brought from the One.

3.

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This ageless offspring now approached the One,
Requesting Him to grant a perfect child:
The Gnosis. He agreed. And instantly
The Gnosis issued forth, and stood at once
In rank with Forethought, born to mother true,
Who by her wish had helped to bring him forth.
The One whose sight blinds mortal eye was glad
To see effulgent fruit swell on His bough,
And He anointed him with chrisim pressed
From His own goodness, and from His own store
Of overflowing virtue's essence, pure.
And thus endowed, he waited on his source,
And added to the glory that no eye
Can see of his progenitor, and His
Prevenient grace, the matrix of the All.
And Gnosis asked for Truth. The One agreed,
And swift on His consent that Truth came forth,
And joined the heavenly rank of all who dwell
In thought that needs no Word. But Truth would speak,
And so the Word then issued forth and joined
The sphere in which Truth lives and moves and has
Its being. And from that Word, imbued with Light
And Life, came what could turn a Word to Deed.
By active Word Sophia came to be.
For she desired a thing exclusive to
Herself. This thought was not inert, and so
It reified: short of perfection, shorn
Of that ideal beauty typical
Of her who gave him birth, a thwarted clone
Of one true-born of heavenly gene and stock,
All self-engendered, selfishly conceived.

4.

The One had not engaged or wed with her
In union divine; no spouse or sire
Had courted her consent, no nuptial bliss
Had blessed the product of chaste amity;
For what she willed was without conference
Of family, or consummation of
Conjugal love; concupiscence instead,
Without relationship, a fantasy impure,
And alien to the hymns its Mother sang
When in accord with her pure ancestry.
In this her wish came true: a monster formed,
A snake with lion-jaws and eyes that blazed

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With horrid fire of self-will. She cast
Him out, beyond the zone of purity
Where he might not be seen by all her peers:
From Wisdom born, in ignorance to dwell.
She gave her child a name, as it befits
A ruler who inherits a great power:
It is Ialdabaoth, Matter's Prince.
Ialdabaoth strutted forth, and marched
From place to place, far from the place where he
Was born. And annexing still more he formed
Self-glorifying spheres of fire that still
Flare on unto this day in heaven's dome.
Then raising his right hand - his arrogance -
He masturbated, got Authorities,
Egged on by fantasies of unknown realms.
And as Sophia's light within him shone
And gave him unique power: because of this
He blasphemously called himself a god.

5.

So he created seven Angels, each with Powers
Sufficient for a year of days, and all
In mimicry of that intuited
From what was long before. But those whom he
Begot, those children of the ignorance
And dark, lacked intimation of the source
And principle from which all things had come.
A week of angels this way rules the world.
But Ialdabaoth, who is Saklas, has
A multitude of faces, more than all,
So he can show himself in any face,
Just as he wills. He shares his nature with
Them - everything except the pristine power
That he drew from his Mother, Wisdom: that
He would not share. This made him cosmic lord,
Conferring - as he thought - divinity
Upon his minion powers. And their "god"
Gave each a place to dwell, a so-called "heaven".
Their urge to rule instilled makes them believe
That they are gods; but Truth is not deceived:
Their bestial natures are revealed to those
Who know. Their god-like attributes are part
And parcel of a fantasy dreamed up
By Saklas; but illusion will not have
Its way - except with those who dwell within
The dream. The light of Truth will chase away

GNOSIS

The mist, dissolve its shifting, swirling shapes
Which frightened those who were deceived, like masks
Pinned onto wind-puffed cloaks. Such images
Invoke some dread reality, from which
They draw their fearful influence and power.

6.

And so it was with these, for Saklas shaped
His schemes upon a kind of memory
Of what he had experienced in the womb
Of what is truly real. And when he saw
The world he had created all layed out,
And gazed upon the panoply which he
Had spun, enveloping his nakedness,
His tongue clapped in his bell, and said:
'I am a jealous God. There is no God
But me.' And so in his stupidity
He gave the game away, and told his friends
There was a God who spurned divinity
The title to this insane jealousy.
The Mother then became aware of her
Deficiency, and how her light had dimmed.
For when she saw her blemishes within
The light of the Pleroma, she then drew
Across her face a veil of darkness: she
No longer could return her consort's smile
Without deception, and be unabashed.
Her holy fear caused her to hover at
The gate of Truth, unable to go in.
For when her offspring in his arrogance
Had taken power from his Mother he
Was ignorant of any provenance
And thought her womb was all that there had been.
Infatuated with his handiwork,
He placed himself upon a pedestal,
An idol to himself. And so she turned;
And so was heard in her humility.

7.

For now she knew what kind of thing he was,
And how he lacked perfection's symmetry.
Up to her source she raised her tear-filled eyes.
He gave the consent, and so a healing flood
Of cleansing holiness washed over her
To make her whole; for Providence agreed

GNOSIS

To supervise her in austerity
Within a place of penance set aside
Beyond carnality and snares of sin,
Where she could re-acquire her modesty.
And then a voice came forth: Behold the Man!
And when the chieftain of the Powers heard
He had no inkling of from whence it came.
At once, however - ignorant or not -
They were aware - to their damnation - that
There was a holy, perfect Source above:
The Mother-Father, Parents who brought forth
All that there is, and whose beneficence
Was now displayed in dazzling Anthropolos.
A shiver went through Ialdabaoth's world,
And rippled through its fundamental sands.
And in the sky the purest element,
Transfigured by the bright epiphany,
Revealed that Truth is Beauty, Beauty Truth.
And so the carnal gang beheld a light
Infuse the cavern of the world below.
Their eyes were opened, and they saw revealed
The shimmering glory of the Son of Man.
The upstart god addressed his fawning clan:
'Come let us make a thing like what we saw
To give some aim and purpose to our plans.'

8.

So each and every one of them then gave
A little something from his psychic pouch,
And made an entity from out themselves,
Each adding layer on layer of plastic stuff,
Along the lines of what they had just seen.
Thus a reflection creaturely became,
And looked just like the sole original -
The perfect Anthropolos. And then they said,
'Now let us call him Adam, that his name
May light our high road to imperium.'
And so this wondrous work, this body came
About - not yet of flesh, but harbouring
A vital force that tapped the secrets of
Their universe, their sevenfold harmony,
Encapsulated microcosmically
In sense and a potential agency.
And yet there was something in short supply:
The thing had no vocation to fulfil,

GNOSIS

And thus no will to try, and lay inert.
No aspiration graced the dawning day.
Sophia wanted to retrieve the power
Which she had given to her bastard son.
In innocence she came and humbly asked
The Mother-Father of transcendent All
Who is most merciful. And He decreed
That Gnosis should go down to that cold place
Where ignorance prevails. His mission was
To liberate the power from Saklas' breast
Sophia's gift - by sowing in his mind
A seed of thought which he, unwittingly,
Would think his own, and thereby bring forth Life.

9.

And so this thought came unsolicited
To Ialdabaoth: 'Blow into his mouth
Your holy breath, and what you made will rise.'
And so, unwittingly, the demiurge
Released the prison door: the pneuma fled
From out those boastful lips, and found a home
By transmigrating to the psychic breast
Of Adam, tabernacling in a shrine
They patterned on what they had briefly glimpsed
Of holiest of holy from afar.
That body stretched its limbs and waxed in strength,
Transfigured by the glory of true life.
Elsewhere, within the stony hearts of all
The Powers the bitter weed of envy sprang,
For they believed this fragrant bloom was fed
By them - that their hearts' blood had soaked the soil
From whence it sprang, and that it was their own
Vitality that ran along the veins
Of that bright Man. Their flaws exposed by his
Wise luminosity, they cast him in
A pit, and heaped around him all their dung,
The heavy excrescence of their days.
So Adam came within the mortal sphere,
Coiled there and then of base material,
Engendered from desire within the dark,
Enlivened by a soulless breath, mere air.
Thus was our fetter forged, our dungeon made,
By which these bandits now enslaved the Man,
Who, in the darkness, soon forgot the light
And grew accustomed to the stench of death.

GNOSIS

10.

This was the fall to end all falls, the end
Confounding all true ends. And yet not quite:
The One, then brimming with parental love,
At once felt pity for His spirit-kind
Which Saklas had unknowingly released,
But which still wandered in the orbit of
The Powers, an orphan of a kingly line
Without a regent, subject to the whim
Of upstart tyrants thrall themselves to time.
And so He sent in His beneficence
A helper for Sophia's hard-pressed power -
The refugee in Adam's breast - a light
From Light, a living icon of true Life,
The one called Zoe, Adam's ghostly nurse
And teacher, toiling at his side, to show
The way to his beginning and his end,
And how he fell, and how again might rise.
This Eva nestled in the new Man's heart,
Out of the Powers' sight, that Wisdom might
With healing grace thus find her lost way home.
And that Life was the Light of men. And so
Now Adam shone, refulgent in this light,
With rainbow-aura, envy of the Powers
Who made him. And his mind outshone them all.
The Mother-Father, rich in mercy, One
Who shows concern although He has no need,
He sent us Zoe, nurturing the power
That dwells within the heart of His own race,
And those who turn their face unto the light.
And Saklas, when he saw a light had shed,
Found ways to make this earth a darker place.

11.

For when he realised that we surpassed
Him in our loftiness of consciousness,
He wanted to appropriate our mind,
Not wise enough himself to realise
That his desire was well beyond his grasp.
He made a plan with his authorities,
And by incestuous union with their dam,
Heimarmene was made. Thus the supreme
And cruellest jailer then came into being,
With her array of manacles and chains
Called "times" and "seasons", "moments", "ages", "dates",

GNOSIS

Those fetters from which none could be exempt
Outside the All, nor gods nor mortal men,
Now doomed to live within a space of time
That was the past, or will be days to come -
But never now, the present never seized,
With minds obsessed with what will be and what
There might have been, with schemes and plans stretched to
Infinity, but that eternal "now"
Beyond their ken. And hence the consciousness
Of the Beyond eluded us again.
And furthermore Man was engenderised,
By which the husband, stronger than the wife
In limb, for males might claim a spiritual
Domain irrelevant to Truth derived
From high authority - for Saklas knew
He must divide and rule. And then he cast
Them out of Paradise, and caused the sky
To frown, and made the ground to freeze, and forced
The couple to seek shelter in dark caves.

12.

And Saklas gazed on Eve, whose graceful limbs
Were bathed in gnostic glamour from above,
And lust flared in his heart, and a desire
To penetrate that awesome mystery,
And colonise her belly with his seed.
So Saklas raped poor Eve, and in due course
Two sons were born, and Cain and Abel named;
And thanks to Saklas, these his bastards were
Endowed with seed to replicate themselves,
The psychic and the carnal; one inspired
By wind, the other by Sophia's ghost.
Meanwhile, within a place of Life the Man
Called Adam met the Woman Eve, and each
Encountering each within their very core
Begot the Son of Man called Seth, the true
Descendant of Sophia in the line
Of Anthropos. This son was blessed by those
On high, and his anointed offspring to
Eternity, for these are called to dwell
Within perfection's courts, and taught to spell
Their names inscribed upon the scroll of Life,
While monuments to flesh collapse upon
The soil of sin. For those who truly live
Cannot abide the dark, and they must light
A lamp and visit all the catacombs

GNOSIS

Where the enlightened have been forced to dwell
And lead them to the sunlight up above.
Thus shall the righteous gather, and assist
Each other on the way, that true mankind
Might find its rightful place within the All,
And holiness, made whole, might be complete.