

## Is there something as “Christian Gnosticism”?

Using this kind of phraseology can indeed elicit response from especially the so-called “learned”, something that then indeed calls for an objective approach to this complex, yet not so difficult to grasp, issue.

Anybody who has gone to the trouble of acquainting themselves with this type of esoteric knowledge, will naturally respond when the slightest attempt is made to marry Christian theology/thought with this pagan, apostate type of knowledge. However, considering this particular issue from many sides, therefore once again objectively, one would of course adopt a different type of approach, namely to tread cautiously when it comes to making wild statements, e.g. that there can *never* be such a thing as “Christian” Gnosticism. *Never* is of course just as good as proclaiming that apostasy has *never* entered the church and “apostasy” would therefore be, for this type of naïve/blindfolded Christian, also something we must never try to apply to the “Christian” Church. Looking, however, without bias and prejudice to this very complex issue, we will indeed adopt a totally different approach.

Once we are prepared to objectify the teachings of the Gnostics, an approach to the Scriptures which indeed entailed philosophizing about especially the God of the Old Testament, His existence, the universe and its relation to God as Creator, man's salvation, etcetera, and which esoteric path entails specific prescriptions to man in order to help him attain ultimate spiritual bliss, we will of course sing a different song. That is over and opposite those who will then stick to their guns and who will prefer an alternative path of worship, that is in comparison with the apostolic doctrines laid down for us in the New Testament gospels and letters. What it boils down to is then that man is apt to confess in accordance with the knowledge he has been trained in. Real leadership, on the other hand, is able to discern and to objectify and therefore to also invent. A true leader will therefore not always go by the general rules and prescription, but such a person will be able to see the broader picture regardless of what has been taught him/her.

Throughout the ages God has appointed this type of leadership, those then with insight and understanding – and on the spiritual level those led by the Holy Spirit over against those led by the spirit of satan, Christ's great opponent and naturally also of those who want to follow Him in Spirit and in truth. And there is hardly any other study field that brings to light this battle between Light and Darkness, than making a study of Gnosticism and its impact on Christianity. For this reason the term “Christian” Gnosticism is sometimes applied in order to differentiate between mainline Gnosticism over against the subtle (sometimes brazenly clear) blend between “Christianity” and “Gnosticism”, an admixture which only can be objectified once we realize God's severe judgment against and disapproval of mixing the table of God with the table of Satan (Paul).

Should we, however, be prepared to change lenses, i.e. to look more closely to Gnosticism and how ideas originating from this apostate type of spirituality have indeed made their subtle impact on Christianity, one would be prepared to accept that it had indeed blended in many ways with Christian practices and thought.

For this very reason we are today sitting with an apostate church which has brazenly prescribed to the flock of God an alternative path, i.e. to that path which the apostles of Jesus had brought us and indeed since the gospel had gone forth from the Upper Room. Those “scholars” and “learned” who then love to get on the bandwagon ever so quickly and who are obviously not prepared to objectify Gnosticism and especially its impact on Christian thought, are then indeed adding insult to injury as we will, by following their insufficient teachings, be led all the more stronger into the quagmire of “apostasy” and just because we are bent on keeping in place what was imposed on us via the

very early stream of apostasy that had hit the gospel of Jesus full-force and also because of false "Christian" (often also "Jewish Christian") teachers who were motivated to impose Gnostic thought and reason on believers in Jesus Christ. They were then the ones who were adamant to exchange the truth for a lie (Paul, Rom. 1.25).

Although there are then indeed not a well-defined "Christian Gnosticism" in place, i.e. should we think in terms of either Gnostic or Christian thought, what we are indeed sitting with today is a blend of the two and which actually, and once again retaining objectivity, is indeed nothing but Gnosticism having a strong Christian flavour! Should we doggedly force ourselves to believe that the gospel we are acquainted with today, i.e. pertaining to the so-called "mainline Christian Church", has retained its apostolic spiritual purity, we are misleading ourselves and we are trying to uphold theological ideas which are more in line with the post-apostolic apostate Church than with that very gospel Jesus had rendered to His hand-picked apostles. For this very reason, and because of a blending of Gnosticism, namely false knowledge, with Christian thought and practice, and which had impacted strongly on the early post-apostolic Church, we are sitting with issues such as,

- 1) The Mother worship;
- 2) The "infallible" Trinity
- 3) Rejection of the Holy Spirit power gifts as the apostles had participated therein, i.e. in the Upper Room outpouring, also thereafter, pointing to them as initiators of the rejection of the Holy Spirit Gifts (Charismata) and especially glossolalia (speaking in tongues). They clearly replaced the Gifts with mysticism, meditation as in occultism, sorcery, incantations, magic spells, etcetera. And what is the sign of mainline Christianity other than rejection of the Gifts of the Spirit as they were applied in the early apostolic assemblies?
- 4) Belief in the immortality of the soul (e.g. that the dead is merely "passing on" in stead of awaiting the resurrection (1 Cor. 15) - a blend of Hinduism which also impacted on Gnostic thought and then via Gnosticism again on Christianity;
- 5) Idol (Icon) worship which was undoubtedly incorporated by the post-apostolic Church and blended with her doctrines and worship system, and which was initiated and condoned by the Gnostics;
- 6) Endless theological and philosophical reasoning on God's existence and which behavioural pattern has clearly manifested strongly in early post-apostolic times causing the emergence of the so-called "Catholic" (in general) Church – Questions were asked, e.g.: Is God a Trinitarian or a Unitarian God? Does Mary intercede for us? And clearly associating her with the Holy Spirit too);
- 7) How God relates to the universe and its origin, furthering the continual debate on God's origin and His nature, even having a bearing on His Name;
- 8) An aversion to the Old Testament Scriptures which attitude could be detected even in some of the Reformation's leadership (=that the Old Testament is not really necessary reading);
- 9) An aversion to the Old Testament Creator of the world and this type of teaching contributing indirectly to the rise of anti-semitism;
- 10) An aversion to sexuality and procreation the natural way and as God is upholding it in the

Scriptures for us (Rom. 1; 1 Tim. 1.10). What we classify in accordance with the Word of God as “sin” was not sin to the Gnostics for they rationalized their immorality this way. They approved all kinds of sin and their following was consequently large. Their message was in other words easy ensuring a regular income for them – compared to the apostles of Jesus who, on the whole, had to toil in faith.

- 11) The Gnostics planted an aversion to the female role in Church leadership which stance carries a subtle form of male chauvinism finding expression in their type of revelation and esoteric teachings – masculinity attached to the unmarried status (a weird approach indeed yet clearly carrying connotations of male election above female rejection – male chauvinism which is still strongly felt in Church worship except, on the whole, among the Pentecostals. They therefore distorted Scripture to suit themselves and their teachings. Some Gnostics allowed women in leadership roles, however, they either promoted licentiousness or, on the other hand, the unmarried status. Prostitution, fornication and adultery prevailed among them and we can infer this from Jesus' reprimand against the Nicolaitans (Book of Revelations, the seven letters).
- 12) The Gnostics then focused on procuring money from the Cross, something that had gained momentum after the apostles of Jesus had left the scene, giving them and of course the apostate church following in their ways, its materialistic ambience – an example which was clearly set for the modern, affluent Church;
- 13) The NT Apocrypha are tainted with Gnostic thought and blatant apostasies are therefore found in these writings, amongst others the baptism in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit which was not practised by the early Church but which can be laid at the door of the post-apostolic Church, the Mother worship, etcetera.

Then of course, and contrary to what was propagated in the past, it seems that Essenism blends in many ways well with Gnostic thought and reason and especially when it comes to a kabbalistic approach to spirituality, mysticism, even having a bearing on the incarnation doctrine (God appearing/born in the flesh in stead of the Son putting on flesh, 1 Jn 4).

The Gnostics were further the ultimate propagators of “knowledge” and this is why we have been sitting with “essential formal theological training” in Christianity ever since the apostles of Jesus had left the scene. Formal theological training meaning the establishment of Bible institutions and formal tertiary training which indeed has a relation with the Jewish Yeshivahs but which in essence has strong affinities with the “clever” Gnostic teachers, e.g. Valentinus of whom is said that he nearly made it to the See of Peter, Marcion who had many schools where his disciples were trained in order to let their word of teaching be made credible and acceptable to one and all, a trend that is clearly fully in sway and of course affecting the whole spectrum of Christianity (post-apostolic Christianity), i.e. from post-apostolic “Catholic” down to twentieth century “Pentecostalism” in all its diversity.

Unless one therefore has a “good” certification from a well-established university, one's Biblical knowledge is regarded as inferior and what is so remarkable with this type of Gnostic path, going back of course to its earliest (humble) beginnings, is that those claiming to “have it all” are often those very ones who are keeping apostasies well in place! And just because they are willingly following in the path of knowledge that was paved by the well-established post-apostolic apostate leadership and which of course were the forerunners of the secularized faith we are sitting with today.

Fact is, and this should be clear to those who are willing to change their blurred lenses of traditional thought – so deeply steeped in a Gnostic approach and of course following in the path of reason and philosophy – adopting rather than the real stance, namely to look with an open mind at what had happened to the first-century gospel of Christ instead of merely plodding doggedly on in the path that was laid down in the post-apostolic age by apostate teachers.

Who, boasting “Christianity and real Biblical knowledge”, can for instance still support Irenaeus (Church Father of the so-called “true” flock) blindly, i.e. without realizing that he was indeed speaking out against heresies, however, himself having, ironically, been a spokesperson for the unbiblical Mother worship! How many “scholarly” propagators of “truth” are quick on the bandwagon, defending the faith that was rendered to them not via the first-century apostles and in purity of thought and doctrine, but by apostate theologians who had reasoned the gospel that was once rendered unto the saints (Jude v3) clean out of the Bible, replacing it of course with their own type of “deeper” theological knowledge.

Weren't the Gnostics also those very ones who were bent on bringing to light, via their esoteric knowledge and their theological reasoning, the “real and true”, in fact “the deep path of mystery and knowledge” to their congregants, e.g. Valentinus who is said to have been so verbal that, as was stated previously, he had almost occupied the illustrious *Chair of Peter*! Now, can we still speak of a “Christian” Gnosticism, taking of course into account the vast impact of its subtle apostate spill-over on early Christianity?

It should be clear to at least those who want to give an ear (“He who has an ear, let him hear!”), that the very strong Gnostic pattern of thought, i.e. steeped of course in an initial blend of paganism and Judaism (Cerinthus often being called the “father” of Gnosticism) and of course having gained strong momentum also with Basilides and his son, Isadore (presumably from Syria where he too had quite a number of schools well in place and of course teaching a blend of Egyptian, Syriac, Judaic and Christian thought. One of the important legacies which still manifests today, is therefore Basilides' mystic, “silent” approach to worship the Pythagorean (mystic) way. We must in other words constantly be “quiet” in Church keeping silent during worship rather than praising the Lord, a Biblical prescription indeed (OT Psalms). And this is what it boils down to!

There is to this day Christian teachers propagating this type of silence in worship forcing their congregants not to participate in any way in loud worship, clear speaking in tongues, praising God joyfully the apostolic way and as Paul rightly is sharing his *simcha* praise in Christ with his Corinthian congregants. No wonder many Church buildings have become sepulchers breathing total dead silence! (However, some have adapted to modern trends and so well that the noises that have now fallen in place are indeed there, yet these too are nothing but a whipping up of emotion as only true and real spirituality, breathing with God's real Spirit Power, is able to breathe life over a corpse!).

Besides, who has taken the “very important and very well-conducted, impressive” choir participation and illustrious concert singing in Church to the level of state-of-the art, live presentations? Wasn't it the Gnostics who boasted in this type of worship, pushing on the periphery, even clean out of the Church, the true praise and worship which should actually be offered by all the congregants/those who sometimes go to great trouble just to attend the weekly church service?

Today, we are forced, when either attending the church service or watching DSTV Church services, to bear with what is so brazenly offered on platforms. The dramatic shows offered with very obviously the pastors' approval, are clearly pulling in the spirit of the world and often to such extremity that one cannot help but align these platform concerts with post-apostolic Gnostic thought and practice as “sin” and “sinfulness” are also, and on the whole, completely pulled out of

proportion by Christians who tend to rationalize the prescriptions of God - especially since it was propagated by apostate (!) Charismatic preachers that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!” Fact is, those “in Christ” will acknowledge God's full prescription and they will then shape their walk with God around the broader whole, i.e. in accordance with the prescriptions pertaining to both the Old and the New Testaments.

What a shame it indeed is using the Name of the Lord this way, aligning it to such profanity! In true Gnostic manner “anything” then clearly goes! Dancers, clad in skinny tights and body gear that neither becomes God's prescriptions nor goes along with His promised Presence, are performing like automates, jumping up and down as IF God is in need of this type of secular performance in what we dare to still call “His” Church!

I can go on asking who was the very one who introduced the spirit of the world to the Church? Wasn't it Simon Magus, also sometimes referred to as an Essene Samaritan, and who was rebuked by the apostle Peter for trying to bribe the Apostle of Jesus, making a brazen attempt this way to secularize the apostolic faith as if the faith and what we are gaining in Christ, i.e. in and through the Cross, could ever be bought with such vulgar price! And just to be noticed and to gain an illustrious position among the deeply committed apostles of Jesus (Acts 8)!

Can we see satan's dark motive coming to light here, namely to attack the very early Church and its pure spirituality, trying to establish (Gnostic) satanic lies and deception even in the days of the holy apostles of Jesus? How many today mean well, yet they don't bide by Biblical prescription and this way truth is exchanged for a lie and permitting satan to come in only to overthrow the work of God causing immense damage to souls who are always (!) hungry for the real, living, old, pure Gospel steeped in the shed blood of Jesus!

Repentance and confession of one's sins were not part-and-parcel of a Gnostic's make-up! Keep this too in mind. Therefore, let us, believers in the risen Christ, do not bring a mixed sacrifice, a mixed offering to the Lord for God is against sharing the table of the Lord with the table of Satan!

Let us therefore be on our guard against Gnostic deceptive “leniencies” for the Church of Jesus Christ today (generally meant) are steeped in Gnostic pride, Gnostic apostasy, in a Gnostic spirit-of-the-world approach to the Gospel! There is only one message remaining for the millenium Christian or Jewish Christian who want to make the Bride: Repent! Return to former ways, to the first-century apostolic Path of Truth or the flock of God are in for condemnation by God! (see Jude v3).

The Bride therefore has to dissociate herself from Gnostic influence which indeed does not only manifest on the spiritual (knowledge) level but which also has a bearing on Christians' spiritual walk with Jesus. Keep in mind that the Gnostics were the forerunners of the Christian flock's spiritual contamination in post-apostolic times!

It is said that the very Simon Magus gained such influence with the State (the Roman officials) that his Church or movement\* was acknowledged and allowed certain essential rights, i.e. before mainstream catholic teachers could succeed in clinching a “deal” with Rome for the erection of their places of worship (church buildings). Do not these things say something which many are overlooking and just because “Christian” Gnosticism is not objectified properly?

Once pagan thought is established (e.g. Gnostic ideas), it will blend quickly with the broader Christian message and in such a way that eventually what was regarded as “pagan” is accepted as “Biblical” truth. And this is where we must ask God for His Holy Spirit guidance and so that we may be able to see the full picture and then not only isolated segments of truth for it is the whole

that counts more than its parts.

Therefore we can indeed today, in reflection, speak of a “Christian” Gnosticism, however, not regarding Gnosticism per se as Christian but looking sharply at the whole and so that we will be able, once again through God's grace and mercy and His wonderful Holy Spirit direction, to understand, God's Spirit guidance giving us the ability to separate the chaff from the corn, and so that we will be able to see the bigger picture and so that we will be able to properly understand what God desires of us, followers of Jesus, pointing always to the right Biblical path, a path which will always be in line with Biblical prescription!

Ester Blomerus

Writing against apostasies and their impact on Christian thought since 1968. There is indeed no blindness as dark as spiritual darkness and especially if “properly” trained theologians and teachers do not want to change their man-made, traditionally acquired lenses, for God's sharp, Holy Spirit understanding. I think those teaching must once again go “into the desert” to pray and mainly with the intention to seek the face of the Head of the Church (Jesus) and so that a reorientation of what was rendered to us (by the apostles of Jesus versus the post-apostolic, apostate Church leadership), can once again lead us back to apostolic Truth (Rom. 1.25; 2 Pet. 2.1-3; Hand. 20.17+; 1 Joh. 2; 2 Tim 3 & 4).

“Pagan” applies indeed to the days of the apostles but where paganism has made its impact in certain ways on Christian thought and practice (=in those days), yet reverberating to this day in our Christian thought and practice, we may indeed still refer to this type of influence without thinking that we are anachronistically inclined. We can only deny “pagan” impact on our faith, once we dissociate ourselves in our Christian walk from this type of apostate influence.

\*Church buildings/basilicas were used for worship but gathering together in public this way required acknowledgment by the State, something that had only come for post-apostolic mainstream Christendom with Constantine I.

2015-05-19