

GNOSTIC HERESIES

THE
GNOSTIC HERESIES
OF THE
FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES

BY THE LATE
HENRY LONGUEVILLE MANSEL, D.D.

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S
SOMETIME PROFESSOR OF ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY AT OXFORD

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS WORK, LIFE, AND CHARACTER

BY THE EARL OF CARNARVON

EDITED
BY J. B. LIGHTFOOT, D.D.

CANON OF ST. PAUL'S

WIPF & STOCK • Eugene, Oregon

Wipf and Stock Publishers
199 W 8th Ave, Suite 3
Eugene, OR 97401

The Gnostic Heresies of the First and Second Centuries
By Mansel, Henry Longueville
ISBN 13: 978-1-60608-285-0
Publication date 10/24/2008
Previously published by John Murray, 1875

INTRODUCTION.

AT the request of some common friends, I have endeavoured to put upon paper some few recollection of the late Dean MANSEL. I do not pretend to write a memoir of his life; my principal, and indeed my only, object in this letter is to retrace the impressions which many years of close friendship and unrestrained intercourse have left on my mind; and if indeed, I have occasionally diverged into the public side of his character, it has been because I knew him so well in every aspect and relation of life, that I have found it difficult to confine myself to that with which I feel I am and ought to be here mainly concerned.

My first acquaintance with Dean Mansel was made twenty years ago at the University, when he had everything to give, and I had everything to receive. As I think of him, his likeness seems to rise before me. In one of those picturesque and old-world colleges, in rooms which, if I remember rightly, on one side looked upon the collegiate quadrangle with its sober and meditative architecture, and on the other caught the play of light and shade cast

by trees almost as venerable on the garden grass—in one of those rooms, whose walls were built up to the ceiling with books, which, nevertheless, overflowed on the floor, and were piled in masses of disorderly order upon chairs and tables, might have been seen sitting day after day the late Dean, then my private tutor, and the most successful teacher of his time in the University. Young men are no bad judges of the capabilities of a teacher; and those who sought the highest honours of the University in the Class schools thought themselves fortunate to secure instruction such as he gave, transparently lucid, accurate, and without stint, flowing on through the whole morning continuously, making the most complicated questions clear.

But if, as chanced sometimes with me, they returned later as guests in the winter evening to the cheery and old-fashioned hospitality of the Common Room, they might have seen the same man, the centre of conversation, full of anecdote and humour and wit, applying the resources of a prodigious memory and keen intellect to the genial intercourse of society.

The life of old Oxford has nearly passed away. New ideas are now accepted, old traditions almost cease to have a part in the existence of the place, the very studies have greatly changed, and—whether for good or evil—except for the grey walls which seem to upbraid the altered conditions of thought around them, Oxford bids fair to represent modern Liberalism, rather than the Church and State doctrines of

the early part of the century. But of that earlier creed, which was one characteristic of the University, Dean Mansel was an eminent type. Looked up to and trusted by his friends, he was viewed by his opponents as worthy of their highest antagonism, and whilst he reflected the qualities which the lovers of an older system have delighted to honour, he freely expressed opinions which modern reformers select for their strongest condemnation. The lines of that character were not traced in sand. They were graven in the very nature of the man, part of himself, and often influencing the mind of those with whom he came in contact.

Such he was when I first knew him twenty years ago—in the zenith of his teaching reputation, though on the point of withdrawing himself from it to a career even more worthy of his great abilities. It was then that I formed an acquaintance which ripened into deep and sincere friendship, which grew closer and more valued as life went on; over which no shadow of variation ever passed, and which was abruptly snapped at the very time when it had become most highly prized.

Dean Mansel's mind was one of the highest order. Its greatness perhaps, as was truly said, by Canon Liddon, was not such as best commands immediate popular recognition or sympathy, but it was not on that account the less powerful. The intellect was of such a kind that some may have failed to appreciate it, and to understand that they 'were close to a mind—almost the only mind in England—to which

all the heights and all the depths of the most recent speculation respecting the highest truth that can be grasped by the human understanding were perfectly familiar ;' but now that death has intervened, a truer estimate, as so often happens, is possible ; and both by those who knew him personally, and by those who can only know him in his writings, his very great power will perhaps be more fully acknowledged. I do not mean that his remarkable capacity was or could be ignored. The honours that he had gained, and the position that he had achieved, would alone have rendered this impossible ; and at Oxford there was no misapprehension, on this point, as to the man. There the wide range of his mind and attainments was correctly appreciated ; but the outer world knew him chiefly as a great metaphysical thinker, and perhaps only a minority even of those few who have an acquaintance with metaphysical studies rated him at his true standard. Of his consummate gifts in the province of metaphysics none, indeed, but a professed metaphysician can with propriety speak ; yet this an outsider and an old pupil may say—that for clear thought, full knowledge, and an unsurpassed gift of expression—qualities which give especial value to this branch of study—he was second to none. So singularly lucid was the language in which difficult and involved subjects were presented by him to the reader or hearer, that none had the excuse that Bishop Butler modestly suggests to those who may be perplexed with the hardness of style which is to be found in his own

masterly works. If, indeed, from a different point of view, Dean Mansel's writings were open to criticism, it was that this extreme lucidity and force of expression were such that in literary controversy he sometimes dealt out to his opponents heavier blows than he possibly intended. One of his antagonists, worthy of all respect—and all the more that, like Dean Mansel, he has passed away from the arena of earthly controversy to a scene where those higher questions of a future life on which he sometimes dwelt are now all solved—has left a proof of his candour and truthfulness in the admission that, although still adhering to his own view of a particular subject under dispute, he was overmatched by the Dean in the actual dialectics of debate. It often occurred to me that his possession of this singularly transparent style, when dealing with the most abstract and complicated questions, was in a great measure due to a perfect familiarity with classical literature. He sought and mastered it in early life, and, unlike many who are inclined to disparage, for more modern studies, the learning which for so many generations gave to the world its greatest minds and its most humanising gifts, he followed and delighted in it to the last. And, like a grateful mistress, classical learning rewarded his devotion with that style and skill of fence which lent him so formidable a superiority in the literary warfare of theological discussion.

Nowhere was this more conspicuous than in the now famous Bampton Lectures on the 'Limits of Religious Thought,' which he preached in 1858. But

for him those lectures had a yet greater importance. They were a new point of departure, and, in a somewhat wider sense, the beginning of his public life. From the pulpit of St. Mary's he stepped at once into the foremost rank of modern theological writers; and the classical tutor, the professor of moral philosophy, however eminent locally, became at once a power in, and even beyond, the walls of the University. From this time he wielded an influence which he never lost, and which, had he lived, he would, I believe, have largely increased. But those lectures were its origin. They passed through several editions, they were repeatedly reviewed and canvassed, and they became almost a text-book in the schools of the University. They had as readers alike those who could appreciate, and those who were incapable of apprehending, the reasoning; they became the subject both of an understanding and of an unintelligent discussion; until at last some one was found who from impatience of argument, or from love of paradox, or from jealousy of the logical limits assigned to the liberty of human thought, declared that he had discovered a latent heresy in a chain of reasoning which to the great majority of men seemed orthodox and plain enough. But the ingenuity of a somewhat perverse reasoning was attractive, and so others—often but little qualified to form a judgment on such a subject—not only accepted on trust the statement, but repeated it in every exaggerated form of expression.

It would be entirely beyond my meaning were I

to enter in any way upon such a controversy. Yet I will venture to assert that, when these criticisms have passed away and are almost forgotten, the lectures will remain amongst those monuments of theological argument which it is the boast of the University to have raised up for the guidance of her children in defence of the truth. Certainly those who knew the sincere piety and devoted orthodoxy of the lecturer were aware how little there was in the personal character of the man to lend confirmation to the charge.

I do not think that Dean Mansel would have desired to be spared the free comments of those who differed from him. His character was in this respect so robust and fearless, and he had such well-founded confidence in his mental powers of self-defence, that he was the last man to shrink from the challenge of a fair fight. But it is remarkable to observe how before his death—through the gradual recognition of his great powers—he had almost lived down the adverse, if not unfriendly, criticisms of an earlier period, and to compare the public estimate of his fitness for the Chair of Ecclesiastical History and for the Deanery of St. Paul's. When, indeed, the honours and responsibilities of this first office came to him, some cavils and questions were suggested; and, though no one could venture to allege in such a man unfitness for the office, it was hinted that political and indiscriminating favour had placed him in a sphere which was less than congenial to his ordinary habits of study. There was so far doubtless the semblance of fact in

this allegation that Dean Mansel's literary work had followed the line of abstract rather than historical study. But his earlier if not his earliest predilections, as those who knew him best were aware, inclined to a theological rather than a philosophical course of study. Philosophy was, I think, in his eyes the companion of theology; and, though the accidents of his literary life gave a predominance to the philosophical side, the theological inclination remained undisturbed. Thus, if any there were who hoped or thought to trace a flaw or an inequality of power in this to him comparatively new field of labour, they were disappointed. No really weak point in the harness could be detected; and I believe that it will be generally as it was then locally admitted, that his vigour, knowledge, and logical capacity were as eminent here as they were elsewhere. It is perhaps an evidence of his singular ability that whilst few men in such circumstances as his have more frequently or fearlessly laid themselves open to criticism, none came off more unscathed by the attacks which those who descend into the arena of polemical controversy must expect to meet. But perhaps the secret of his almost unvaried success lay in this, that he never undertook what he could not do, and thus never failed to do what he undertook.

Dean Mansel did not long hold the Chair of Ecclesiastical History. He held it, indeed, barely long enough to justify the choice made of him; but his lectures on the Gnostic heresies of the early centuries, of which, fortunately, the MS. notes re-

main and form the volume, in which it is desired to include this short notice of him, furnish some illustration of the power which he brought to bear in the discharge of his task. The events of his later life are crowded into a narrow compass. He had been appointed by the Crown to the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History on the advice of Lord Derby; he was transferred from it on the nomination of Mr. Disraeli, Lord Derby's successor, to the Deanery of St. Paul's. By this time his powers were so fully recognised that criticism itself was silent, and from all parties and individuals there was an acknowledgment that no better man could have been selected.

He addressed himself with all the vigour of his character to the work which lay before him. The commutation of the estates belonging to St. Paul's Cathedral had to be carried through, and it was, I believe, by the laborious and minute calculations into which he entered that the bases of the present arrangements were laid. But whilst the best part of his day was devoted to these public duties, all available leisure was still given, as formerly, to the work of the student and the scholar, in which his real nature was centered. Time was not, indeed, allowed to enable him to give to the world one of those great philosophical works in defence of the principles of religious faith which his friends expected, which perhaps he meditated, and to which none could have done more justice than himself; but, during the short interval that remained, he nearly performed the part which he had undertaken in 'the Speaker's Bible,' and he completed within the

last two chapters his commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew.

But there were other public duties which his new position entailed upon him ; and they were not altogether easy ; for in the Deanery of St. Paul's he succeeded one who was as eminent in letters as he was deservedly popular in general society. And his time was very short. Little more than one year of life remained ; yet in that year he made a probably lasting mark, and he gave a great impulse to a work which others must carry to completion.

Of all the many architectural restorations which taste and devotional feeling have dictated to this generation, none can be the subject of a heartier and more undivided agreement than the revival of the Metropolitan Cathedral for its religious uses. The most sensitive of critics will not easily discover an objection to such a work ; the coldest cannot see unmoved the crowd of men and women gathered on some Sunday evening under that airy dome—the forest of up-turned faces directed to the preacher, who sways at will an audience of thousands drawn together from the busiest, wealthiest, most cultivated, and varied capital of the world. But the spectacle, grand as it is, is full of inequalities and contrasts. The great Cathedral, indeed—rebuilt by Wren after the Fire of London, and the masterpiece of his genius—bears comparison with the stateliest churches of other countries, but bears comparison only in its outlines and general proportions. Without, it is a pile of most noble parts and lofty conceptions : within, the

bare walls, naked of the enrichment and ornament which the architect designed, chill the rising enthusiasm, while the fantastic cenotaphs and tasteless monuments that are grouped along the aisles mock the glorious span and the ascending lines of the dome. Since Wren's death little or nothing had been done towards the completion of his great work ; but the desire had not been wanting. Dean Mansel's able and cultivated predecessor had expressed himself ten or twelve years previously in a letter, which has been incorporated in his '*Annals of St. Paul's*,' as follows :—

‘I should wish to see such decorations introduced into St. Paul's as may give some splendour, while they would not disturb the solemnity or the exquisitely harmonious simplicity of the edifice ; some colour to enliven and gladden the eye, from foreign or native marbles, the most permanent and safe modes of embellishing a building exposed to the atmosphere of London. I would see the dome, instead of brooding like a dead weight over the area below, expanding and elevating the soul towards heaven. I would see the sullen white of the roof, the arches, the cornices, the capitals, and the walls broken and relieved by gilding, as we find it by experience the most lasting as well as the most appropriate decoration. I would see the adornment carried out in a rich but harmonious (and as far as possible from gaudy) style in unison with our simpler form of worship.’

These words, which deserve to be rescued from

the oblivion of an appendix, and which are worthy of the learned and accomplished man who wrote them, seem equally to represent the feelings of Dean Mansel, and recall to me not only the anxiety with which his mind was set upon the task of embellishment and completion, but almost the words in which he often spoke to me of it. The great meeting which through his means was convened at the Mansion House, and the large contributions that at once flowed in, were an earnest of the probable success of the undertaking, which, large as it undoubtedly was, had yet been fully measured beforehand in his mind. But, unhappily, hostilities between France and Germany broke out, money was needed for other purposes, and the designs and arts of peace were swept away into the bottomless pit of an all-absorbing war. Still, in spite of the difficulties which a vast Continental struggle created, the work advanced, though slowly. A committee, consisting of men of very various attainments, pursuits, and views, had been brought together, and under the Dean's guidance and good sense they had entered upon large improvements.

Differences were being smoothed, difficulties were being overcome, when, in the midst of scheme and purpose, in the full vigour of ripe intellect, in the midst also of the domestic repose which a singularly happy marriage had conferred upon him, death came suddenly like a thief in the night, and in one moment of time arrested for ever the active brain, and closed the career of administrative power and promise.

Others have succeeded to him. They have taken

up the work as it fell from his hands: it is to be hoped that they may continue it in a manner and spirit worthy of its commencement.

These were the public duties to which the last few years of Dean Mansel's life were devoted with a singleness and completeness of purpose that those only who knew him can fairly estimate; but there was also a private side of his character which the outside world perhaps hardly suspected.

His range both of reading and of observation was very large, and it was perpetually widening under the desire to know more. To him the words which were once spoken of a great writer might perhaps not unfairly be applied—

His learning such, no author old or new
Escaped his reading that deserved his view,
And such his judgment, so exact his test
Of what was best in books, as what books best—

so readily did his mind embrace each new subject of interest, foreign though it might be supposed to be to his ordinary habits of life and study. As fast as he came in contact with new information or ideas he took them in and assimilated them in such a manner as to have them at command. Every fact, every illustration, was available for its purpose, every argument was duly marshalled under its respective principle. I cannot recall an intellect more solid, compact, and balanced, or where everything was, so to speak, more in its place, and more susceptible of immediate employment. This was doubtless due to a large combination of qualities; to abilities of a very

high order, to learning, accuracy, careful cultivation and self-discipline, with no inconsiderable play of the imaginative faculties, which lent a freshness to every subject that he touched; and, lastly, to a prodigious memory, which had the rare gift of being as discriminating as it was powerful. If he retained with absolute exactitude things great and small, and seemed never to forget what he had read or heard, it was that all those facts or statements were, in his opinion, worth remembering. He seemed, moreover—which is very rare with such memories—to be able to reject the useless matter which forms so large a portion of every subject, whilst he made absolutely his own everything that he might hereafter need. Lord Macaulay once told me that with a little effort he could recall all the Latin themes and verses which he had written since the age of twelve or thirteen, and he implied, if he did not actually say, that there was a burden as well as a delight in such a marvellous power. Dean Mansel's mind, though singularly retentive, was not, as I have said, of this kind; nor was it one of those very rapid memories which are instinctive and instantaneous in their operation: his mind seemed rather to go through a sort of mechanical process until the missing fragment for which he sought was recovered, and—like the pattern of a mosaic pavement—was recovered perfect in all its details.

But, though this complete precision of memory was a counterpart of the exactness of his logical faculty, it never dried up in him, as in so many persons, the sense of humour or the springs of imagin-

ation. He had a genuine love of poetry, to which he constantly recurred; and, though he treated it only as a pastime, he could on occasion show himself a graceful writer of verse. In the 'Phrontisterion,' a squib written at the time of the issue of the University Commission—but one which few will hesitate to acknowledge as of the highest literary merit which this generation has produced, and worthy to be read by the side of Frere's Aristophanic translations—there are lines not only remarkable for their wit, but of very noble thought and expression. And this sense of humour was a genuine characteristic of the man. His conversation was full of it; his private letters overflowed with it; he had an inexhaustible reserve at command for every occasion, and, it may be added, for every society. And yet it was always lit up by the light of kindness; it ceased with an instinctive and immediate sympathy in the presence of a friend's anxiety or sorrow; and if ever the edge of his wit was for the moment unduly sharpened, as in controversy may have happened, it arose rather from a strong sense of the wrong which he thought he was opposing, than from any personal antagonism to his opponent. He was, in fact, one of the truest, steadiest, and most warm-hearted of friends, never varying with change of circumstance or lapse of time; sometimes even with an amiable inconsistency, reconciling the mistakes or shortcomings of those in whom he was warmly interested, to a standard which his affection or regard had set up.

To this must be added—perhaps from this in a

certain measure proceeded—that which constituted one of the great charms of his character, a perfect simplicity of feeling and taste. No amusement was too simple, no occupation was unworthy of him, just as he considered no person below the level of his mind. He would come down to the dullest; and would either learn whatever there was to be acquired, or would pour out the abundant stores of his own knowledge, without a thought that he was intellectually condescending to one less competent than himself. I remember, during part of a summer that I spent with him by the seaside, his characteristic determination to understand the method of sailing a boat, and the acuteness with which he resolved the practical details, as he got them from an old fisherman, into the more scientific principles by which they were really governed. I remember, on another occasion, the keen interest with which he learnt from a gamekeeper some of the mysteries of his craft in the rearing of birds; and though Dean Mansel would never have become a good pilot or gamekeeper, yet this keen interest in the occupations of others kept his own mind singularly fresh and active. Nor was this simplicity confined to the intellectual side of his character. He was morally most just and single of purpose. It would be to such a man a poor compliment to say that he was as entirely above the temptations of profit and personal interest, and as incapable of an unworthy act, as any whom I have ever known. I would rather say that he was one whose scrupulous conscientiousness was hard to satisfy, and in whose

mind the conflicting pretensions of duty and interest never held debate.

In politics he, like many others, lived too late for his generation. He saw the decay and change of ideas and institutions which were precious in his eyes ; and, though he resisted it to the utmost of his power, he watched with pain the revolution of thought that has carried so far from her old moorings the University which had been long his home, and with which his earlier life, and fortunes, and affections were all so closely intertwined. It can be no offence to any one to say that, during the last few years of his residence at Oxford, he was the pillar and centre of the Conservative cause. By wisdom of counsel, ability of speech, fertility of resource, he vindicated it in the eyes of the outer world, and gave it at once strength and ornament ; for of him, in letters at least, it might be truly said that he touched no subject that he did not in some way embellish it. His Liberal opponents knew it, and have left it on record that, when he was transferred from the Chair of Ecclesiastical History to St. Paul's, the ablest head had been taken away from the Conservative party. I have, indeed, heard some who knew Dean Mansel very slightly, say or imply that in the affairs of public life, where conciliation and the spirit of 'give and take' are necessary, he was of a somewhat impracticable disposition ; but such an opinion was incorrect. His contemporaries were perhaps sometimes misled by the force with which his opinions were expressed. Nor was his intellect one naturally

favourable to compromise. It was of too logical and incisive a kind. But his strong common sense and his keen appreciation of the course of events led him to apply the strength of his mind to any reasonable compromise which had a chance of lasting; and thus, though practically averse from change, he was, as I have often had reason to observe in my intercourse with him, always moderate in counsel, and anxious for expedients to reconcile his love of the Church and University with those alterations of public or Parliamentary opinion, to which he was not blind, however he might seem to shrink from the open recognition of them. His Conservatism, in short, was not the Conservatism of prejudice, but of individual conviction, founded on severe thought, adorned by no common learning, and bound up through the entire course of his life with the principles of his religious belief. In these days—when fundamental principles are raised and burning questions are too often discussed with moderate knowledge, excessive asperity, and sometimes hysterical passion—that fine intellect, ripe learning, and even judgment can be ill spared from the service of the Church. And if I often have cause to lament the loss of a private friend, there is still greater reason to regret from the wide sphere of public usefulness, and especially from the world of letters, the withdrawal of one whose qualities peculiarly fitted him for the work of his time.

CARNARVON.

September 25, 1874.

PREFACE.

THE course of Lectures on the Gnostic Heresies which is published in this volume was delivered before the University of Oxford by Dr. Mansel, as Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, in the Lent Term 1868. He had been appointed to this chair by the Crown in the preceding year, having previously held the Waynflete Professorship of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy. Some regret was felt at the time that one who had shown himself eminently competent as a teacher of philosophy should be transferred to another branch of study, which did not seem to be so peculiarly his own. These lectures are a complete answer to any such misgivings. There were extensive provinces of Ecclesiastical History—more especially of early Ecclesiastical History—which could only be successfully occupied by one who had a familiar acquaintance with ancient and modern philosophy. To these provinces more especially Professor Mansel directed his attention; and the present volume is one of the fruits of a very brief but energetic professoriate.

I do not think that I need offer any apology for having recommended the publication of these lectures. The student will be grateful for the guidance of a singularly clear and well-trained thinker through the mazes of this intricate subject. Since the discovery of the work of Hippolytus, which has added largely to the materials for a history of Gnosticism, English literature has furnished no connected account of this important chapter in the progress of religious thought. Indeed, with the single exception of Lipsius' elaborate article in Ersch and Gruber, which was written subsequently to this discovery, all the French and German works (so far as I am aware), which treat of the subject as a whole, labour under the same defect. Nor again, will the subject itself stand in need of any apology. The time is gone by when the Gnostic theories could be regarded as the mere ravings of religious lunatics. The problems which taxed the powers of a Basilides and a Valentinus are felt to be among the most profound and most difficult which can occupy the human mind. Even the Gnostic solutions of these problems are not altogether out of date in the second half of this nineteenth century, as the dualistic tendencies of Mr. John Stuart Mill's posthumous *Three Essays* will show. At such a time an exposition of the subject from a distinctly Christian point of view, written by one who apprehended with singular clearness the gravity of the issues involved, cannot be regarded as otherwise than opportune. It is only by the study of Gnostic aberrations that the true

import of the teaching of Catholic Christianity, in its moral as well as its theological bearings, can be fully appreciated.

There is some reason for believing that Dear Mansel at one time contemplated the publication of these lectures ; but, if so, he was prevented by pressure of other work from fulfilling his intention. Had he lived to carry out this design, the world would doubtless have received considerable additions from his hands. But it is not probable that in any essential points he would have found it necessary to modify his opinions. I am informed by those who knew him best, that he never set pen to paper until he had thoroughly worked out his subject, in all its main points, to his own satisfaction ; and this representation is fully borne out by the appearance of his manuscripts, which are singularly free from corrections. It would therefore have been in the more finished execution, and in the fuller illustration, than the latest hand of the author would have been discerned. But this want did not seem to be a sufficient reason for withholding the lectures from the public.

For the reason indicated, the amount of labour which has fallen to my share has been much less than usually devolves on the editor of a posthumous work. With the exception of the alteration or addition of a word here and there, or the occasional transposition of a clause for the sake of clearness, the lectures are printed exactly as they appear in the manuscript. Any attempt to supplement them with

matter of my own would have destroyed the unity of the work, without any countervailing advantage. In the verification of the references I have had the assistance of the Rev. Dr. Baker, Head Master of Merchant Taylors' School, to whom my sincere thanks are due for relieving me in great measure of this laborious task; and for the preparation of the index I am indebted to the Rev. J. J. Scott, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge. Such labour as I myself have bestowed on the publication of these lectures has been cheerfully tendered as a tribute of respect to the memory of one from whom, during the very short period of my connection with him as a member of the Chapter of St. Paul's, I received nothing but kindness.

J. B. LIGHTFOOT.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE:

Christmas 1874.

CONTENTS.



LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
Meaning of term <i>Gnosis</i> —Gnosticism applied in actual use only to perversions of Christianity—Idea of Redemption foreign to Greek philosophy—This idea the distinctive feature of Gnosticism—Indicates its partly Christian source—Language adopted from Christianity—Title <i>Gnostic</i> —Distinction between true and false knowledge by St. Paul; by Clement of Alexandria—Gnostic estimate of the relation of Christianity to Gnosticism—Gnostic doctrines of Absolute Existence and Origin of Evil—Destroy personality and free-will—Hostile to Christianity—Lead to the same conclusions as modern Materialism	1-15

LECTURE II.

SOURCES OF GNOSTICISM.

Absolute]Existence and Origin of Evil merged into one problem by the Gnostics—Absolute Existence handed down to them from Plato—Philo—The <i>Logos</i> —The <i>Powers</i> —Gnostics differ from Philo in substituting Christianity for Judaism—Judaizing and Anti-Jewish Gnostics—Origin of Evil, in Greek Philosophy little more than glanced at—Reason of this—In the East, two principal theories—Dualistic or Persian—Zoroaster—His system—Resemblance to Mosaic narrative—Influenced by intercourse with the Hebrews—The Persian theory compared with the Indian or Emanation theory—Brahmanism and Buddhism—Their doctrines—Persian influence on Gnosticism in Syria—Indian influence in Egypt—Therapeute—Conclusion, three principal sources of Gnosticism	16-32
---	-------

LECTURE III.

SOURCES OF Gnosticism—CLASSIFICATION OF Gnostic SECTS.

	PAGE
Sources of Gnosticism—The Kabbala—Jewish Metaphysics—Resembles the philosophy of Spinoza—Its teaching—‘Sepher Yetzirah,’ or ‘Book of Creation’—‘Zohar,’ or ‘Light’—Theory of the latter—Emanations—Adam Kadmon—Three worlds, two spiritual, one material—Final destiny of all—Resemblance to Gnosticism—Chronological difficulties—Date and authorship of the books of the Kabbala—Influenced by Persian philosophy—Relation to Gnosticism—Simon Magus—The Marcosians—Basilides and Valentinus—Classifications of Gnostic sects—Mosheim—Gieseler—Neander—Baur—Matter—Order adopted in these Lectures	33-47

LECTURE IV.

NOTICES OF Gnosticism IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Simon Magus mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles—Earliest notices of Gnostic teaching found in the Epistles of St. Paul to the Asiatic Churches and to Corinth—Epistles to the Corinthians—Ephesians—Colossians—Gnostic term <i>Pleroma</i> —Pastoral Epistles—The Resurrection spiritually understood—Epistle to the Hebrews— <i>Aeon</i> occurs in these Epistles—Not used in the Gnostic sense till later	48-63
---	-------

LECTURE V.

NOTICES OF Gnosticism IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Prophecies of Gnosticism by St. Paul and St. Peter—Epistle of St. Jude—References to the Nicolaitans—St. John, Apocalypse—Date—Nicolaitans mentioned by name—Nicolas, one of the seven deacons—Reference to Ophites—The Gospel written to refute Gnosticism—Cerinthus and others who denied the Deity of our Lord—The Epistles directed against the Docetæ—In the First Epistle references also to Cerinthus—Apostolic treatment of heresies	64-78
--	-------

LECTURE VI.

PRECURSORS OF GNOSTICISM—SIMON MAGUS AND MENANDER.

	PAGE
Simon Magus mentioned in the New Testament—His pretensions—	
Hostile both to Christianity and Judaism—Adopts the titles <i>Logos</i>	
and <i>Power</i> —His <i>Ennoia</i> —His teaching—The Great ‘Announce-	
ment’—The first principle, <i>Fire</i> or <i>Silence</i> —Has two natures—The	
world generated by six emanations or ‘Roots’—The Perfect man	
the complete manifestation of the whole—Relation to Persian theo-	
sophy and Jewish Kabbala—This theory figurative—Fragment of	
‘the Announcement’ preserved by Hippolytus—Simon a false	
Christ, not merely a false prophet—Personal history—Statue at	
Rome—Accounts of his death—Menander	79-94

LECTURE VII.

THE OPHITE SECTS.

Simon Magus and Gnosticism—Ophite sects—Naassenes—Ophite	
Trinity—The Serpent—Cainites—Sethites—Peratae—Ophite	
heresies recognise Jesus as a Redeemer—Ophite doctrine of Re-	
demption—Sources and date of the first Ophite sects—Relation to	
Pantheism—Ophite doctrine of the Fall identical with that of	
Hegel—Conclusion	95-109

LECTURE VIII.

CERINTHUS—CARPOCRATES—THE NAZARENES AND EBIONITES.

Gnostic errors in relation to the Person of Christ—Result of regarding	
matter as evil and the source of evil—Docetic heresy in the Apo-	
stolic age—Ebionite heresy—Cerinthus—Early mention of him—	
Teaching borrowed from Philo—Regarded Judaism as imperfect,	
but not evil—His Christology—Opposed by St. John—Baptism for	
the dead—Carpocrates—Date—Teaching—Differs from Cerinthus	
—Licentiousness of his teaching—His son Epiphanes—This	
teaching, how reconciled with the Gospel—Prodicus and the	
Adamites—Nazarenes and Ebionites—Their doctrine—Origin of	
the names—Gospel of the Ebionites—Testimony borne by heretics	
to the Catholic Faith	110-128

LECTURE IX.

SYRIAN Gnosticism—Saturninus—Tatian—Bardesanēs.

	PAGE
Menander the parent of Syrian and Egyptian Gnosticism—Saturninus— His relation to Simon and Menander—His teaching—A combina- tion of Persian and Alexandrian doctrine—The moral alternative, asceticism or licentiousness—Tatian—Life and tenets—Hydro- parastatē—Bardesanēs—A pervert from Catholic Christianity— His Gnostic teaching—Does not separate the Supreme God from the Creator—The Book of the Laws of Countries—His son Harmonius—Their hymns—Syrian Gnosis—Its peculiar tenet . . .	129-143

LECTURE X.

EGYPTIAN Gnosticism—Basilides.

Basilides—His teaching—Non-existent Deity—Non-existent world— The Word the seed of the world—Rejects common Gnostic ac- counts of the Origin of Evil—Influenced by Greek philosophy and Alexandrian Judaism—Introduces a Christian element from the Gospel of St. John—The seed of the world a threefold sonship— Relation of this allegory to the Mosaic account of Creation—The Great Ruler—The Ogdoad—The Hebdomad—The first Archon, the Ruler of the Ogdoad—Abraxas—The Ruler of the Hebdo- mad—His idea of Redemption—The Gospel the means of deliver- ance—Three periods of the world—Period of the Revelation of the Sons of God—The Illumination—The Great Ignorance— Basilideans accepted the reality of the life and passion of Jesus— Basilides does not adopt the Docetic heresy—Nor Persian Dual- ism—Nor Emanations—The account given by Irenæus probably later—His relation to Plato—Caulacau—His teaching not im- moral—His relation to Judaism—Position of his teaching as a system of philosophy	144-165
--	---------

LECTURE XI.

EGYPTIAN Gnosticism—Valentinus and the Valentinians.

Valentinus—His heresy refuted by Irenæus—Sources of his system— Differs from that of Basilides—Primary Being, Depth, Unspeak- able—Three series of Æons—Principle of his system—Deals with
--

	PAGE
ideal archetypes—Claims support from the Gospel of St. John— Use of terms <i>Æon</i> , <i>Pleroma</i> —Valentinian theory of the Fall a desire after knowledge—The Redemption a communication of knowledge effected by Christ—A second Christ, Jesus or Logos— Emanates from the thank-offerings of the <i>Æons</i> —The Divine Nature represented by a plurality of distinct attributes—Relation to the philosophical theology of St. Augustine . . .	166-183

LECTURE XII.

VALENTINUS AND THE VALENTINIANS.

Romance of Valentinus in three parts—The second part— <i>Achamoth</i> — Her sorrows and sufferings—Her offspring, material, animal, spiritual—The theory an attempt to explain how the Spiritual gives existence to Matter—The third part of the romance—For- mation of the visible world—The Demiurge—His work—This theory recognises three classes of men, material, animal, spiritual— Valentinian theory of Redemption—Two kinds of Redemption for the two higher classes of men—No Redemption for the material part—Valentinian views of the nature of Christ—Tendency of this teaching about Redemption—Followers of Valentinus—Ptolemæus —His letter to Flora—Marcus—Heracleon—His commentary on St. John's Gospel—The Coptic <i>Pistis Sophia</i> not written by Valen- tinus—System of Valentinus in principle Pantheistic—Its relation to the Kabbala . . .	184-202
--	---------

LECTURE XIII.

ASIATIC GNOTICISM—MARCION.

Marcion—His position—His life—His teaching, a combination of Rationalism and 'higher criticism'—His system critical, not metaphysical—He began by criticising the Old Testament—His Antitheseis—Meaning of the term 'just'—Tertullian's answers to Marcion—Marcion distinguishes between two Gods and two Christs—His Christ of the Old Testament—His Christ of the New Testament has neither a human soul nor a seeming birth, only a seeming death—The contest between Christ and the Demiurge—The relation of Christ to the Supreme God unex- plained—He denies the resurrection of the body—Condemns marriage—Marcionite baptism—Asceticism—Assumes only three principles, but none essentially evil—His teaching the transition of Christian speculation from philosophy to pure theology .	203-219
--	---------