

*The Kabbalah of
Jesus Christ,
Part 1*

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The True Good Tidings

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one

When I met him, it was the most crucial moment of my life. In my case, the teaching of Jesus came true: “seek and ye shall find, ask and ye will be given.”

How we met was also remarkable. It happened during one of the worst snowstorms in Oregon.

I did not know that area so well, and I shouldn't have tempted fate. I was driving a small rented car, and I shouldn't have ventured into those terrains, magnificent though formidable. I was looking for a place to start a new life, fed up with urban civilization where the downfall of mankind was becoming increasingly evident. Life was becoming more and more fast and difficult, while changes in the climate made urban existence even harder. Globalization and unfavorable legal changes affecting my work conditions pushed me to take up a new challenge. At forty-seven, I had to make a new life for myself. With my wife, we decided to fulfill our lifelong dream and buy a small farm to start a vineyard.

The day this story began, I had an appointment after a breakfast with a real estate agent. The farm he was supposed to show me met most of our demands. It spread on a gentle mountain slope. The meadows were surrounded by a forest, with a river meandering downhill. The area was stark but very beautiful. I took a few photos and recorded the information about the property with the intention of relating it all in detail to Anna.

Having inspected the farm, I said goodbye to the agent and headed back home. Something told me to take a different route, leading through

a wilder, uninhabited area. It turned out to be a big mistake. The ride was smooth at first, with magnificent views. I hadn't taken into account, though, that the weather would change so suddenly and radically! It was only noon but the sky began turning dark and was soon overcast by leaden, racing clouds. The wind got stronger and it began to snow. I was angry and did not feel like going farther on, but it was too late to turn back. Another adventure I got into at my own bidding.

The weather in the mountains can change quickly, and at the time it all evolved in a flash. Due to my own foolishness, it could have ended tragically. I did have maps, but they did not indicate any villages or settlements in the area. The snowdrifts were growing with the strong wind, and I had to drive slowly and very cautiously. The blizzard slowly mounted, and I knew that the only chance of survival would be to find a house by the road or meet someone with a four-wheel drive. Visibility was very limited, and at some point I did not notice a snowdrift on the road. Not driving fast enough, I could not break through it and finally was stuck for good. I knew that was it. The only thing to do was to pray and plead with the Guardian Angel for help. The phone was out of range and useless, so I could only hope for a miracle. And the miracle did happen! Suddenly, in between gusts of wind, I heard the sound of an engine. Someone was slowly driving along my way. I quickly jumped out of my car, almost in front of the approaching car. The driver slowed down and stopped. I was saved. It was an old four-wheel-drive Ford. I ran up to the driver's door and knocked on the glass. The window opened slowly and the face of an old man emerged.

"I think you need help," he said with a smile.

"Sure. I did not notice the snowdrift and got stuck. Can you pull me out?"

"No one can pull this car out now, and you could not continue in this snow anyway. The only thing you can do now is be my guest and wait in my hermitage till the blizzard eases off."

I could do nothing but accept his invitation. This was the beginning of the strangest story of my life, a life in which adventures abounded. I took a seat next to the driver and introduced myself. He looked at me with his smiling, slightly slanting eyes and asked me to simply call

him Mu. I thanked him for his magnanimous invitation to stay at his place. We moved and I admitted how imprudent of me it was to choose this route and that probably only his passing by saved my life. At that moment Mu started laughing. I was at a loss. He explained he agreed completely, though not in the sense I thought. Without taking his eyes off the road, he told me the first strange thing, and I assure you, by far not the last I was to hear from him. He said he had known he would meet me and that such meetings are not accidental. For the last three days, the Spirit of Truth, as he put it, had been telling him that this would be the day he would meet the man he had been waiting for. He admitted he was happy I was the chosen one. I was dumbfounded and felt my hair standing on end. Feeling that I was dealing with a mental case, I again regretted having started this trip and wondered whether there was any chance of things ending well. I must have had a strange look on my face, because Mu glanced at me quietly and said with a smile,

"Do not worry, I'm not crazy. I'll explain everything soon."

I did not know what to think of all that. We were trudging along, the blizzard was not getting any better, but Mu was doing pretty well behind the wheel. I could not wait till the end of our journey. It was hard to believe from the view behind the windows, but it was snowing even more. Soon I lost my bearings and any sense of where we were. Suddenly, Mu accelerated, turned right between two big trees, and after a few minutes stopped under a big carport. It turned out later that it was an extension of a small wooden house with a porch on three sides.

"Welcome to my kingdom," said Mu and led me to the main entrance.

He moved quickly and deftly. In the kitchen he used wood to light the fire in a big cast iron stove. The flames started crackling merrily, and it got warm right away. The host was behaving quite normally. He treated me to a cup of delicious hot coffee. The appearance and whole atmosphere of that place aroused my interest in who Mu actually was and what he was doing in this wilderness. The house was small but furnished quite practically. It was made up of two parts. One consisted of a kitchen and a dining room; the other comprised two small rooms separated by a corridor and a bathroom. One of the rooms was full of

pictures, various figures and candles, with a small altar with a beautiful painting of Jesus in the center. It suggested Mu was a follower of Christianity, and I wondered which branch of it.

All this made me very curious, as I also had been seeking the Truth for long years. I had wanted to delve deeply into the teachings of Jesus but so far hadn't met a teacher who could help me attain a profound understanding of them. I already knew that a materialistic and consumerist outlook can only give temporary, illusory satisfaction. Our civilization, the product of only material development, lacks a spiritual, divine aspect, and I could not come to terms with that. I tried to develop an interest in philosophy, but it did not fulfill my expectations, especially in its modern version. There were many issues that I found interesting, but no one could really explain them to me or, at least, make them clearer. I sought chaotically among various religions and spiritual traditions. I studied in depth everything I could lay my hands on regarding the teachings of Jesus but could not understand them. I rarely read the Gospels, not being able to grasp their message.

Mu pulled me out of my deliberations asking a straightforward question:

“Do you know why you have been chosen?”

I looked at him in surprise with what must have been a very silly expression on my face, since he laughed heartily.

“You know perfectly well you want to develop spiritually and have been looking for a long time how to do it! For years I have been delving into the knowledge and teachings imparted to me by my Master. But time is passing, I'm getting old and cannot allow this ancient knowledge to disappear or remain hidden. That is why you're facing a big task of making these teachings public.”

“What is this knowledge you want to bestow upon me?”

The reply was overwhelming.

“I am going to transmit to you the Secret Teachings of Jesus. This should help you understand His path, which in turn will provide you and anyone wanting it with a new sense of life.

Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? And not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not

be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear. (Mark 4:21-23)

These teachings are like jewels. There are many of them in the Gospels, as well as in the apocryphal and canonic letters and scriptures. One just has to know how to decode and read their secret message. Unfortunately, along the centuries, the real understanding of the teachings of Jesus has been, mildly speaking, eroded. This is why, these days, many are abandoning this teaching, and many live as if they have forgotten about His message and precepts. Most people seek fulfillment and security in the external, material world and its riches, never feeling satisfied with them. Man took an interest in himself instead of the whole of reality. There are no real teachers nowadays. Those who teach us often put us in even heavier fetters.

Jesus talked about “the blind who lead the blind.”

It is because of them that we regress in our spiritual growth. People today have lost the true way they should follow in life. They are completely oblivious of the Truth. Jesus would say they are “drunk with the wine of life.”

Most people believe that our civilization has made wonderful progress and that they are wiser than the great teachers of humanity, whose teachings are no longer useful. I feel that they are quite mistaken, unfortunately. The ancient mythologies and verbal traditions convey one main message pertaining to everyone: no matter how long we seek, the answers to the most difficult questions cannot be found in the outer world. Those seeking like that are following the path of Cain, a dead-end for mankind. The way to the truth is the way within, into the consciousness and mind, the true heart of man. This is the only way of solving the mystery of life, which appeared with the appearance of the first humans. It has been hidden from us.

The Bible expresses it beautifully:

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Gen. 3:24)

It should rather be “a whirling sword,” but no doubt you will later understand that yourself.

The teaching of Jesus is that attaining the Kingdom of Heaven is possible here on the earth, during our lifetime. One only has to get past the whirling swords. And you will get to know what they are and what the True Way to Freedom is.

Only by discovering the truth about our existence can we become true human beings, children of God. And to do that, we have to cleanse our minds of the residues accumulated in our collective consciousness for hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of years.

I am going to use this time we have due to the blizzard to tell you as much as possible about the teachings of Jesus. It may help you and others enter the way of the Truth. It is tantamount to experiencing the oneness of all beings in the Spirit. You will then gain a new perspective on others and the whole world, and so your life will take on another, new meaning.

After all, the teachings of Jesus have given us the awareness that there is a real chance of salvation in this life and in this body. The Truths He proclaims can arouse our capacity to experience the world of the spirit. It is His path and teachings that lead us to the experience of the divine. The real, profound, secret teachings of Jesus are hidden in symbols, numbers, and metaphors. However, if we begin to take those methods and symbols literally, as facts, sooner or later we will find ourselves in misunderstandings and problems.

Notice, say, that if the ascension of Jesus Christ were to be understood literally, as his rising into the clouds, we have to reject this in these times.

If you really understand what the words “Jesus was carried up into heaven” mean, you will know that it is about moving into the inner spiritual world we come from, not some outer, material one which exists somewhere on the fringes of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is this spiritual world, the source of everything, that the whole existence and our consciousness emerge from.

The Bible teaches that God created us in His image. Jesus said His Father was a Spirit, and no one had ever seen Him.

Physics has given us an insight into the complexity of all things, as if from the other side of existence, from the other end. The achievements of

modern physicists confirm the significance and authenticity of the deepest teachings of Jesus and other spiritual masters from every era and continent.

Max Planck, the founder of quantum physics, expressed this most poignantly as early as in 1944:

As a physicist... according to my experiences with the atom, I say the following: there is no matter as such. All matter comes into being and exists through a force, which brings the atomic particles into vibration and keeps them together in that tiny solar system of the atom... we have to assume conscious, intelligent spirit behind this force. This spirit is the primordial ground of matter. Not the visible but transitory matter is the real, the true... but the invisible, immortal spirit is the true.

The most recent achievements of quantum physics disclose a world very similar to the perspective of Christ, Buddha, and representatives of other religions founded on the grounds of mystical experiences.

We have been graced to be born as human beings, and so it is important we really get to know who we are. Modern civilization, separating itself from the Spirit, prayer, and meditational contemplation, cuts itself off from the true reality. And so we are getting all the poorer, missing things much more precious than consumer goods. In the spiritual world, man has been created and exists as a perfect being.

Our task is to discover this spiritual heritage in our own life and to return to the roots of existence.

The coming of Christ marked the closure of a certain stage of human development on Earth and the opening of another stage. As you know, Jesus delivered His teaching calling it the Gospel, and it really has had a key role in the history of human salvation. In Greek, “evangelion” means the reward received by someone bringing the Gospel, the new good tidings (this term was already used in this meaning in Greece in the 8th century BCE). Evangelion was a reward not for all tidings but for good tidings. That is how the message of Jesus should be understood: that anyone preaching good tidings will get a reward and payment. There are very few sources of knowledge about the teachings and life of Jesus. These are mostly the Gospels and the Epistles, which are the main source of instructions on how to study and understand those teachings. But even from those few sources, we can see the special significance of the Gospel of Jesus.

For you to get to know those deepest teachings and understand why they have become so secret, I first have to tell you how the Gospels were created and how significant it was for keeping the message of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Jesus transmitted during his life, as well as in later times, was initially conveyed by word of mouth by the Apostles and the first witnesses. The Savior's teaching and life were registered on papyrus and parchment only a few decades after His death, in various places and in different periods, when the development of Christianity forced the need to document those Truths.

The Church itself asserts in the introduction to the Gospels in the Bible:

Both those who transmitted the Good Tidings verbally, and those who transcribed it, made a special selection of the deeds and words of Jesus, sometimes changing the chronologic and topographical context of those words and deeds, in view of the needs and cognitive capacity of the first Christians. The preachers had one ongoing concern: that the preached believe and adhere to the truths of the Gospel.

Another possible trap one should take into account when studying the Gospels is that both successive revisions and multiple translations into various languages could distort or even completely change their meaning. As the Italians say, "every translator is a traitor." Therefore, studying the core teachings of Jesus, including the Gospels, requires great care and knowledge.

A fragment of the biblical prologue to Ecclesiasticus is worth quoting here:

...we may seem to come short of some words, which we have labored to interpret. For the same things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them.

And it is this language and culture in which Jesus thought and attained his knowledge.

We should also consider how a language changes over time, which means millennia in case of Hebrew. Who among us could easily read and understand texts of our ancestors written 500 years ago, not to mention 2000 years ago? One should not forget that words often had symbolic meanings that became obscured over the ages.

Looking for historical or topographical information in the Gospels is pointless, as they only form the background for a deeper message. Initially, the Gospels consisted of words spoken by Jesus Himself, both as parables and the so-called logia, short talks comprising His most important messages and wisdom.

These were difficult theological teachings about human existence. The texts of the New Testament should be assumed to have many layers of meanings, thus understanding them requires inner intuitive cognition. The seemingly simple teachings of Jesus, which mostly appear to be moral and ethical instructions, conceal a deeper truth; ethics and morality are only the foundation necessary to understand it. Reason and intellect are insufficient to realize the message of the Gospels.

The creators of the first Gospels wanted to convey the essence of the spiritual message of Jesus, not an accurate account of historical events. The contemporary custom of writing biographies did not exist at the time, at least not in the same form. The teachings, parables, and stories about the signs and deeds of Jesus alternated with logia, and their main purpose was to attract masses of simple people of various nationalities and different cultures. The result was that the Gospel had been read and understood literally, which significantly trivialized the essential message.

In those times, the verbal tradition played the biggest role in the teachings of masters. Since childhood, people went through a special training to develop memory, which is still amazing to us nowadays.

As regards the instructions of Jesus, the apostles had been transmitting His teachings only verbally for a long period of time. In this initial period when Jesus turned from a teacher into the subject of the teaching, many Gospels appeared, but at the First Council of Nicaea, only four have been acknowledged as canonical (true). The other ones were not accepted by the censors and so were doomed to oblivion. In this way the Church got rid of them, believing they had been wiped out from the world for good. This happened because many Gospels differed radically from the Church's view of Jesus and His teachings. Those who could not find a corroboration of their ideas about the Teacher in the transcribed texts changed words or even whole phrases and, in

the worst cases, prohibited study of those original texts and destroyed them. Fortunately, not everything had been destroyed or forgotten, and some Gospels were hidden so that future generations could discover and read them anew. For instance, the Nag Hammadi scrolls were hidden in a big waist-high jar, and then buried in the ground. All the remaining sources about Jesus and His teachings are already strongly colored by the Christian faith and love of Jesus.

The result was that what had been written in the New Testament has never constituted the entire teaching of Jesus. It is just a part of the tradition carefully transmitted and preserved under the control of the Church. There are also other sources that contain the truth and the teachings, making it possible to understand Jesus's teaching much more deeply. The Church has called them the Apocryphal Gospels. This means "hidden Gospels" in common understanding.

Actually, in ancient Greece, "apocryph" meant a hidden, coded message in a text. This can describe all the Gospels, including the canonical ones, because they contain a lot of information and teachings, coded and hidden behind symbols. Most of the so-called apocrypha appeared in the first century, contemporarily with the books of the New Testament. At first, the apocryphal Gospels seem to be simple texts, but they are difficult to interpret. They usually present a seemingly very archaic theology, but today they can be the basis for uncovering and reviving the true, undistorted teaching of Jesus. Part of the deepest message, difficult to understand today, has been hidden in various metaphors, symbols, numbers, and seemingly simple stories. There were two reasons for this. The first is that the majority of people in those times were not mature enough to understand the deepest secrets of Jesus's message. The second was the concern that, without comprehending the real meaning of those most difficult teachings, people would remove or change them according to their cognitive capacity. Many new source texts with Jesus's teachings have been emerging recently, not without a reason. Such things do not happen by chance. It is the deliberate operation of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. It is conspicuous that almost every discovery is accompanied by some mysterious events. As time passes, these discoveries will certainly change

the attitude of contemporary Bible scholars and theologians towards the New Testament and, consequently, the essence of Jesus's teachings. The newly discovered Truths, which enrich our knowledge about the Wisdom and depth of Jesus's message, cannot be ignored.

Most of the earliest apocrypha are very orthodox texts that present the theology of the first Christians. They were known to and understood and studied by people in the 1st and 2nd centuries. Later on, as the Church theology developed, they began to arouse opposition from theologians and scholars. Consequently, they stopped being propagated and were gradually forgotten. That is why the impact of those texts on us and our civilization is negligible. Theologians, remembering that those apocryphal texts have been banned for many centuries, do not want to realize what great value they could have had for the Church today. There is also a definite difference between the older apocrypha, replete with theological content, and the later apocrypha, basically focused on plot. I will want to bring your attention mainly to two apocryphal Gospels, that of Mary and that of Thomas.

The Gospel of Mary was the one discovered earliest. It was bought in Cairo in 1896 and is kept in the Egyptian Department of the Berlin National Museum. It is the first part of the so-called Papyrus Berolinensis, written in Coptic, the language of the first Christians. Pages are missing from it (1-6 and 11-14), which makes it difficult to interpret its message. However, you will find in it a lot of priceless teachings and information that make it easier to understand Jesus's message.

The Gospel of Thomas the Apostle was written by a disciple of Jesus, Thomas, called "Didymus," meaning "twin" in Greek. This apostle was considered the most talented and wise disciple of Jesus, almost His Spiritual twin. It was he to whom Jesus revealed the deepest truth.

That is why this Gospel is so precious, and the Church might at some point acknowledge it as canonical, even though for the time being it has not done so. It contains no heresies: on the contrary, it is very orthodox, written in a beautiful language, and with full metaphors that indicate that Thomas was blessed with great knowledge and wisdom.

This Gospel was found in the collection of texts in the hidden library of Nag Hammadi. The library consists of thirteen papyrus

codices, also written in Coptic. It was discovered in 1945 in Upper Egypt. It is considered that the Gospel was written in Edessa, where a large early Christian center of worship developed around the tomb of Saint Thomas. The discovery of those manuscripts, as well as of the Dead Sea scrolls from Qumran, certainly did not happen accidentally. Animals played a prominent part in both discoveries, showing people the places hiding those priceless treasures, the Wisdom according to the teachings of Jesus.

Both discoveries show us Christianity in the initial stage of its development. This gives us more knowledge about the so-called Gnostic Christianity, and casts a new light on the teachings of Jesus. Some see gnosis as secret knowledge about God's mysteries, reserved only for the chosen ones. For me, gnosis is great wisdom, a gift granted by the Holy Spirit according to God's will. It is a personal spiritual experience.

The first words from the manuscripts found in Nag Hammadi are:

These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.

This Gospel calls us to be reborn, to rise above materialism, to seek and find the primordial oneness that we come from and that is the foundation of our being. It is full of the deepest teachings of Jesus about the reality and the mystery of existence. They are often very complex and may at first seem nonsensical and impossible to comprehend by ordinary people. The Jesus emerging from this Gospel is an enlightened teacher, a Son of man, and the Kingdom of Heaven He is showing us is of a completely spiritual nature, like in the other Gospels. Didymus Thomas presents Jesus in a way that is different from the New Testament tradition we have gotten used to. This undoubtedly makes it one of the most important Gospels that have so far been discovered. Even though it contains some of the views of the greatest Gnostics, it is not a Gospel with Gnostic knowledge. It contains unknown words of Jesus, but not teachings. The first Church fathers knew the message of Thomas but did not understand some of the logia it contained. They identified them as part of the Gnostic perspective with which they were in fierce argument. Consequently, this Gospel was removed from the New Testament

canon. We could say that only due to a "miraculous survival and discovery" we can get to know and study it anew these days.

Jesus appears here as the "Living" or the Resurrected One: the Son of a living Father, free of mundane, worldly habits. He reveals His salvation teachings to us, but, as is the case with the other Gospels, He explains the deepest teachings only to a group of selected disciples. Some quotations will help you understand this line of reasoning.

But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples. (Mark 4:34)

And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. (Mark 8:30)

And he said unto them, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them." (Mark 4:11-12)

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew.... (1 Cor. 2:7-8)

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds.... (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. (1 Cor. 3:1)

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man is found faithful. (1 Cor. 4:1-2)

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. (Matt. 7:6)

Similar is the line in the Gospel of Thomas 93:

Do not give what is holy to dogs, for they might throw them upon the manure pile. Do not throw pearls [to] pigs, or they might ... it....

The theme of the pearl is also present in other texts. The apocryphal Acts of Thomas include the exquisite Hymn of the Pearl, which poetically describes human awakening from common ignorance. The pearl is also called a jewel, treasure, wealth. In many religions and

myths it symbolizes enlightenment and wisdom attained after waking up to spiritual life. A pearl is born inside an oyster, just like true wisdom is born within man.

So now you understand that the most precious knowledge was transmitted only to the so-called perfect ones. It was an attempt to protect the deepest secret teaching of Jesus from those immature and unworthy of hearing the full Good Tidings.

For this very reason many secret teachings were lost with the death of their depositaries during the bloody beginnings of Christianity. Many initiates were killed in violent incidents, and the knowledge could not be passed on. Suffice it to mention the violent death of James, the brother of Jesus.

In spite of all those tragic events, we find in the Gospel of Thomas a very hopeful message:

Jesus said, whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me; I myself shall become that person, and the hidden things will be revealed to him. (Thomas 108)

Today, with the study of Jesus's teachings and due to His grace, the deepest wisdom can emerge through the Spirit of Truth. However, this is fated only to those who study and practice His teachings with the greatest devotion.

At present, we only know the texts of the first Gospels and the Epistles. We know very little about the original Christian communities. The Gospel of Thomas calls them small, simple, and solitary.

I now have to tell you about the so-called canonical Gospels of the New Testament, as awareness of their history and creation is indispensable for understanding what happened to the teachings of Jesus.

According to the oldest tradition, the Gospel of Mark was written by Apostle Peter. Peter was Jesus's disciple and knew Him very well. This Gospel was probably written as the first in the whole canon and had enormous influence on the creation of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It contains very few logia and teachings, while the accounts of the deeds of Jesus are much more elaborate than in the other Gospels. This always seemed odd and suspect, as it seemed impossible for Peter the Apostle, an ardent disciple of Jesus, not to know the deepest wisdom teachings of

his Great Teacher. Nowadays, however, the Gospel of Mark can be seen in a different light, and its simplicity becomes more understandable with the discovery of the Secret Gospel of Mark. This name is given to fragments of the letter of Clement of Alexandria to Theodore. The manuscript of this letter was found in 1958 by the American Morton Smith, and it was written on three blank pages of a monastery library book. The letter is about the falsification of the Gospel of Mark by the Carpocratian sect, but Clement admits they used a different version, kept in secret in Alexandria, from the one we know from the New Testament. Its contents were richer and deeper. Clement quotes two of its fragments, of varying length. He also grudgingly admits that the expanded version was written in Alexandria by Mark himself and intended only for certain people. I will quote to you this letter in full, since it is very important for understanding the Gospel of Mark version we all know.

From the letters of the most holy Clement of the Stromateis to Theodore:

You did well in silencing the unspeakable teachings of the Carpocratians. For these are the "wandering stars" referred to in the prophecy, who wander from the narrow road of the commandments into a boundless abyss of the carnal and bodily sins. For, priding themselves in knowledge, as they say, "of the deep things of Satan", they do not know that they are casting themselves away into "the nether world of the darkness" of falsity, and boasting that they are free, they have become slaves of servile desires. Such men are to be opposed in all ways and altogether. For, even if they should say something true, one who loves the truth should not, even so, agree with them. For not all true things are the truth, nor should that truth which merely seems true according to human opinions be preferred to the true truth, that according to the faith.

Now of the things they keep saying about the divinely inspired Gospel according to Mark, some are altogether falsifications, and others, even if they do contain some true elements, nevertheless are not reported truly. For the true things, being mixed with inventions, are falsified, so that, as the saying goes, even the salt loses its savor.

As for Mark, then, during Peter's stay in Rome he wrote an account of the Lord's doings, not, however, declaring all of them, nor yet hinting at the

secret ones, but selecting what he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those who were being instructed. But when Peter died a martyr, Mark came over to Alexandria, bringing both his own notes and those of Peter, from which he transferred to his former book the things suitable to whatever makes for progress toward knowledge. Thus he composed a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being perfected. Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven veils. Thus, in sum, he prepared matters, neither grudgingly nor incautiously, in my opinion, and, dying, he left his composition to the church in Alexandria, where it even yet is most carefully guarded, being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries.

But since the foul demons are always devising destruction for the race of men, Carpocrates, instructed by them and using deceitful arts, so enslaved a certain presbyter of the church in Alexandria that he got from him a copy of the secret Gospel, which he both interpreted according to his blasphemous and carnal doctrine and, moreover, polluted, mixing with the spotless and holy words utterly shameless lies. From this mixture is drawn off the teaching of the Carpocratians.

To them, therefore, as I said above, one must never give way; nor, when they put forward their falsifications, should one concede that the secret Gospel is by Mark, but should even deny it on oath. For, "Not all true things are to be said to all men". For this reason the Wisdom of God, through Solomon, advises, "Answer the fool from his folly", teaching that the light of the truth should be hidden from those who are mentally blind. Again it says, "From him who has not shall be taken away", and "Let the fool walk in darkness". But we are "children of Light", having been illuminated by "the dayspring" of the spirit of the Lord "from on high", and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is", it says, "there is liberty", for "All things are pure to the pure".

To you, therefore, I shall not hesitate to answer the questions you have asked, refuting the falsifications by the very words of the Gospel. For example, after "And they were in the road going up to Jerusalem" and

what follows, until "After three days he shall arise", the secret Gospel brings the following material word for word:

"And they come into Bethany. And a certain woman whose brother had died was there. And, coming, she prostrated herself before Jesus and says to him, 'Son of David, have mercy on me.' But the disciples rebuked her. And Jesus, being angered, went off with her into the garden where the tomb was, and straightway a great cry was heard from the tomb. And going near, Jesus rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb. And straightaway, going in where the youth was, he stretched forth his hand and raised him, seizing his hand. But the youth, looking upon him, loved him and began to beseech him that he might be with him. And going out of the tomb, they came into the house of the youth, for he was rich. And after six days Jesus told him what to do, and in the evening the youth comes to him, wearing a linen cloth over his naked body. And he remained with him that night, for Jesus taught him the mystery of the Kingdom of God. And thence, arising, he returned to the other side of the Jordan."

After these words follows the text, "And James and John come to him", and all that section. But "naked man with naked man," and the other things about which you wrote, are not found.

And after the words, "And he comes into Jericho," the secret Gospel adds only, "And the sister of the youth whom Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them." But the many other things about which you wrote both seem to be, and are, falsifications.

Now the true explanation and that which accords with the true philosophy...

Now you know that there were two Gospels of Mark with messages at different levels. The one intended for the chosen and perfected ones was lost. Only the simplified Gospel, the one intended for infants in Christ, survived. The subsequent two Gospels (of Luke and of Matthew) were based on it. What follows then is that the Gospels of the New Testament, except for the Gospel of John, are simplified teachings. This awareness changes our way of reading and studying them. It also becomes clear now why Mark, the companion of the Apostles, the first disciples of Jesus, does not present theological teachings in his Good Tidings, does not interpret facts or texts, and explains or tries to

prove almost nothing. This whole elaborate knowledge was probably included in the secret Gospel, which, as Clement wrote, was more spiritual and dedicated for those working on their inner growth.

It has to be admitted that even though it was written for beginners, the simplified version of the Gospel of Mark does contain the teachings Mark considered necessary for them, even the most secret ones, though in a brief and symbolic form.

The knowledge gained from this secret Gospel, as Clement wrote, led into the innermost sanctuary of the Truth and Spirit hidden by the seven veils. I will try to make you see what these veils are and what is hidden behind them.