

Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Sufism and Kabbalah.

Along with the occult revival of the 19th century came a renewed interest in Gnosticism complete with the reconstitution of the Gnostic Church in France. This new Church of the Gnosis came about in the year 1890, when Jules Doinel, a librarian from Carcassone, was allegedly consecrated as Patriarch by Jesus and two Bogomil Bishops in a miraculous vision. This vision took place at the home of Marie, Countess of CAITHNESS, a well-known Theosophical leader in France at the time. One of the first Bishops that were subsequently consecrated by Doinel was Gerard Encausse (Papus), who had joined the Theosophical Society at age 23. On October 25, 1887, Henry S. OLCOTT personally announced the election of Papus to the newly formed General Council of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, India.

One of the greatest admirers of the Gnostic path was none other than Helena P. BLAVATSKY herself. During the year of her death, 1891, she published an excellent commentary on the ancient Gnostic writing the Pistis Sophia, which was being translated by her secretary G. R. S. Mead. HPB wrote a great deal on the Gnostics throughout her writings, and we are now fortunate to have a compilation of these writings in one volume, "H. P. Blavatsky, On the Gnostics," compiled and annotated by H. J. Spierenburg.

HPB felt that there was an underlying unity between the esoteric traditions within all religions, and that in the case of Christianity this was represented by the Gnostics. She goes on to tell us in the Key to Theosophy that "There are six great schools of Indian Philosophy — the six principles of that unit of wisdom of which the GNOSIS, the hidden knowledge, is the seventh."

No account of the Gnostic tradition would be complete without giving honor to G. R. S. Mead. Mead was the personal secretary to HPB in the last years of her life. He will most appropriately be remembered for his scholarly English translations and commentaries of ancient Gnostic and Hermetic texts. Mead wrote of the Gnostics not only from a scholarly point of view, but also as one who had an inner understanding of these mysteries, or one who had experienced the Gnosis himself.

In 1928, the brothers James and John Pryse, who at one time were well connected with Mead and the Theosophical Society, founded the Gnostic