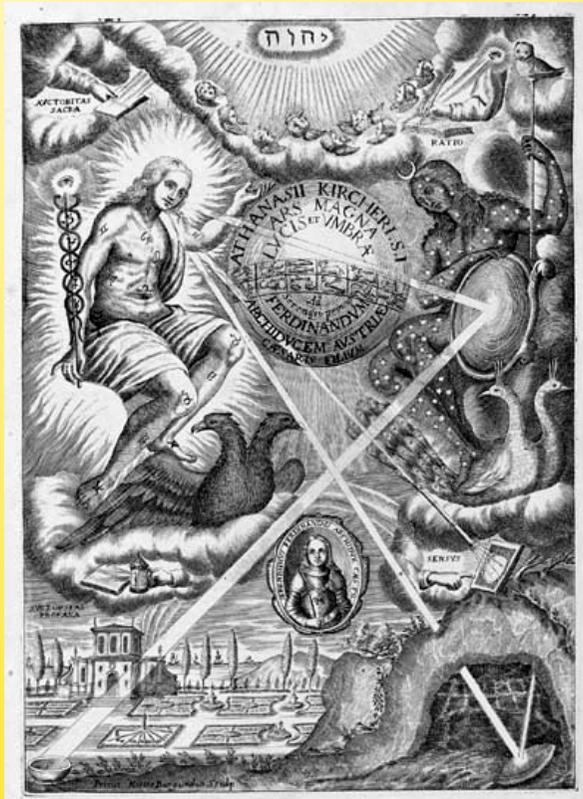


The Teachings of Silvanus



Information on The Teachings of Silvanus

BIRGER A. PEARSON WRITES, "The Teachings of Silvanus is the only non-Gnostic tractate in Nag Hammadi Codex VII and one of the few non-Gnostic tractates in the corpus as a whole. In form, it is a wisdom writing similar to classical Hebrew wisdom compendia such as the biblical book of Proverbs or the deuterocanonical Ecclesiasticus (Sirach). In such literature a teacher offers instruction and admonition to a pupil whom he refers to as his 'son.' The tractate also utilizes two other literary genres common in early Hellenistic Judaism, the 'diatribe' form, derived from popular Stoic and Cynic philosophy, and the 'Hellenistic hymn,' in which praises are offered up to God or to personified Wisdom. Pagan examples of the latter are the hymns or aretologies associated with the cult of the Greco-Egyptian goddess Isis." (The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, p. 499)

P. Bruns writes, "A Coptic treatise in the Nag Hammadi library (NHC 7, 4) contains the teachings of a certain Silvanus. It contains a hortatory address with sapiential teachings of Jewish-Egyptian provenance and a gnostic anthropology and christology. Redemption takes place through the acquisition of a liberating knowledge that is brought by Christ the redeemer and enables those living an enslaved existence to free themselves from the bondage of the material through asceticism and mortification and to make the journey hom to the divine pleroma." (Dictionary of Early Christian Literature, p. 537)

Birger A. Pearson writes, "There can be no question where this author was active, namely, Alexandria. Although the original Greek version of the Teachings of Silvanus as we know it in translation has been dated to the fourth century, after the Council of Nicea in 325, it more likely comes from a time before Nicea. Since the tractate reflects knowledge of the teachings of Origen, it should probably be dated to sometime after his death in 254, sometime in the late third century. What is important to remember, however, is that the tractate contains very early material, including traditions that could even go back to first-century Alexandrian Christianity." (The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, pp. 502-503)

The Teachings of Silvanus

Translated by Malcolm L. Peel and Jan Zandee

ABOLISH EVERY CHILDISH TIME OF LIFE, acquire for yourself strength of mind and soul, and intensify the struggle against every folly of the passions of love and base wickedness, and love of praise, and fondness of contention, and tiresome jealousy and wrath, and anger and the desire of avarice. Guard your (pl.) camp and weapons and spears. Arm yourself and all the soldiers, which are the words, and the commanders, which are the counsels, and your mind as a guiding principle.

My son, throw every robber out of your gates. Guard all your gates with torches, which are the words, and you will acquire through all these things a quiet life. But he who will not guard these things will become like a city which is desolate, since it has been captured. All kinds of wild beasts have trampled upon it, for thoughts which are not good are evil wild beasts. And your city will be filled with robbers, and you will not be able to acquire peace, but only all kinds of savage wild beasts. The Wicked One, who is a tyrant, is lord over these. While directing this, he (the Wicked One) is beneath the great mire. The whole city, which is your soul, will perish.

Remove yourself from these things, O wretched soul! Bring your guide and your teacher. The mind is the guide, but reason is the teacher. They will bring you out of destruction and dangers.

Listen, my son, to my advice! Do not show your back to enemies and flee, but rather, pursue them as a strong one. Be not an animal, with men pursuing you; but rather, be a man, with you pursuing the evil wild beasts, lest somehow they become victorious over you and trample upon you as on a dead man, and you perish due to their wickedness.

Oh wretched man, what will you do if you fall into their hands? Protect yourself, lest you be delivered into the hands of your enemies. Entrust

yourself to this pair of friends, reason and mind, and no one will be victorious over you. May God dwell in your camp, may his Spirit protect your gates, and may the mind of Divinity protect the walls. Let holy reason become a torch in your mind, burning the wood which is the whole of sin. And if you do these things, O my son, you will be victorious over all your enemies, and they will not be able to wage war against you, neither will they be able to resist, nor will they be able to get in your way. For if you find these, you will despise them as deniers of truth. They will speak to you, cajoling you and enticing (you), not because they are afraid of you, but because they are afraid of those who dwell within you, namely, the guardians of the divinity and the teaching.

My son, accept the education and the teaching. Do not flee from the education and the teaching, but when you are taught, accept (it) with joy. And if you are educated in any matter, do what is good. You will plait a crown of education by your guiding principle. Put on the holy teaching like a robe.

Make yourself noble-minded through good conduct. Obtain the austerity of good discipline. Judge yourself like a wise judge. Do not go astray from my teaching, and do not acquire ignorance, lest you lead your people astray. Do not flee from the divine and the teaching which are within you, for he who is teaching you loves you very much. For he shall bequeath to you a worthy austerity. Cast out the animal nature which is within you, and do not allow base thought to enter you. For ... you know the way which I teach.

If it is good to rule over the few, as you see it, how much better it is that you rule over everyone, since you are exalted above every congregation and every people, (are) prominent in every respect, and (are) a divine reason, having become master over every power which kills the soul.

My son, does anyone want to be a slave? Why, then, do you trouble yourself wrongly?

My son, do not fear anyone except God alone, the Exalted One. Cast the deceitfulness of the Devil from you. Accept the light for your eyes, and

cast the darkness from you. Live in Christ, and you will acquire a treasure in heaven. Do not become a sausage (made) of many things which are useless, and do not become a guide in your blind ignorance.

My son, listen to my teaching, which is good and useful, and end the sleep which weighs heavily upon you. Depart from the forgetfulness which fills you with darkness, since if you were unable to do anything, I would not have said these things to you. But Christ has come in order to give you this gift. Why do you pursue the darkness when the light is at your disposal? Why do you drink stale water, though sweet wine is available for you? Wisdom summons you, yet you desire folly. Not by your own desire do you do these things, but it is the animal nature within you that does them.

Wisdom summons you in her goodness, saying, "Come to Me, all of you, O foolish ones, that you may receive a gift, the understanding which is good and excellent. I am giving to you a high-priestly garment which is woven from every (kind of) wisdom." What else is evil death except ignorance? What else is evil darkness except familiarity with forgetfulness? Cast your anxiety upon God alone. Do not become desirous of gold and silver, which are profitless, but clothe yourself with wisdom like a robe; put knowledge on yourself like a crown, and be seated upon a throne of perception. For these are yours, and you will receive them again on high another time.

For a foolish man usually puts on folly like a robe, and like a garment of sorrow, he puts on shame. And he crowns himself with ignorance, and takes his seat upon a throne of nescience. For while he is without reason, he leads only himself astray, for he is guided by ignorance. And he goes the ways of the desire of every passion. He swims in the desires of life and has sunk. To be sure, he thinks that he finds profit when he does all the things which are without profit. The wretched man who goes through all these things will die, because he does not have the mind, the helmsman. But he is like a ship which the wind tosses to and fro, and like a loose horse which has no rider. For this (man) needed the rider, which is reason. For the wretched one went astray because he did not want advice. He was thrown to and fro by these three misfortunes: he acquired death as a father,

ignorance as a mother, and evil counsels - he acquired them as friends and brothers. Therefore, foolish one, you should mourn for yourself.

From now on, then, my son, return to your divine nature. Cast from you these evil, deceiving friends! Accept Christ, this true friend, as a good teacher. Cast from you death, which has become a father to you. For death did not exist, nor will it exist at the end.

But since you cast from yourself God, the holy Father, the true Life, the Spring of Life, therefore you have obtained death as a father and have acquired ignorance as a mother. They have robbed you of the true knowledge.

But return, my son, to your first father, God, and Wisdom, your Mother, from whom you came into being from the very first in order that you might fight against all of your enemies, the Powers of the Adversary.

Listen, my son, to my advice. Do not be arrogant in opposition to every good opinion, but take for yourself the side of the divinity of reason. Keep the holy commandments of Jesus Christ, and you will reign over every place on earth, and will be honoured by the angels and archangels. Then you will acquire them as friends and fellow servants, and you will acquire places in heaven above.

Do not bring grief and trouble to the divine which is within you. But when you will care for it, will request of it that you remain pure, and will become self-controlled in your soul and body, you will become a throne of wisdom, and one belonging to God's household. He will give you a great light through it (wisdom).

But before everything (else), know your birth. Know yourself, that is, from what substance you are, or from what race, or from what species. Understand that you have come into being from three races: from the earth, from the formed, and from the created. The body has come into being from the earth with an earthly substance, but the formed, for the sake of the soul, has come into being from the thought of the Divine. The created, however, is the mind, which has come into being in conformity with the

image of God. The divine mind has substance from the Divine, but the soul is that which he (God) formed for their own hearts. For I think that it (the soul) exists as wife of that which has come into being in conformity with the image, but matter is the substance of the body, which has come into being from the earth.

If you mix yourself, you will acquire the three parts as you fall from virtue into inferiority. Live according to the Mind. Do not think about things pertaining to the flesh. Acquire strength, for the mind is strong. If you fall from this other, you have become male-female.

And if you cast out of yourself the substance of the mind, which is thought, you have cut off the male part, and turned yourself to the female part alone. You have become psychic, since you have received the substance of the formed. If you cast out the smallest part of this, so that you do not acquire again a human part - but you have accepted for yourself the animal thought and likeness - you have become fleshly, since you have taken on animal nature. For (if) it is difficult to find a psychical man, how much more so to find the Lord?

But I say that God is the spiritual one. Man has taken shape from the substance of God. The divine soul shares partly in this one; furthermore, it shares partly in the flesh. The base soul is wont to turn from side to side, [...] which it images the truth.

It is good for you, O man, to turn yourself toward the human, rather than toward the animal nature - I mean toward the fleshly. You will take on the likeness of the part toward which you will turn yourself.

I shall say something further to you. Again, for what will you (masc. sg.) be zealous? Did you (fem. sg.) wish to become animal when you had come into this kind of nature? But rather, share in a true nature of life. To be sure, animality will guide you into the race of the earth, but the rational nature will guide you in rational ways. Turn toward the rational nature, and cast from yourself the earth-begotten nature. O soul, persistent one, be sober and shake off your drunkenness, which is the work of ignorance. If you persist and live in the body, you dwell in rusticity. When you entered

into a bodily birth, you were begotten. Come into being inside the bridal chamber! Be illuminated in mind!

My son, do not swim in any water, and do not allow yourself to be defiled by strange kinds of knowledge. Certainly you know that the schemes of the Adversary are not few, and (that) the tricks which he has are varied? Especially has the noetic man been robbed of the intelligence of the snake. For it is fitting for you to be in agreement with the intelligence of (these) two: with the intelligence of the snake and with the innocence of the dove - lest he (the Adversary) come into you in the guise of a flatterer, as a true friend, saying, "I advise good things for you."

But you did not recognize the deceitfulness of this one when you received him as a true friend. For he casts into your heart evil thoughts as good ones, and hypocrisy in the guise of true wisdom, avidity in the guise of conservative frugality, love of glory in the guise of that which is beautiful, boastfulness and pride in the guise of great austerity, and godlessness as great godliness. For he who says, "I have many gods," is godless. And he casts spurious knowledge into your heart in the guise of mysterious words. Who will be able to comprehend his thoughts and devices, which are varied, since he is a Great Mind for those who wish to accept him as king? My son, how will you be able to comprehend the schemes of this one, or his soul-killing counsel? For his devices, and the schemes of his wickedness, are many. And think about his entrances, that is, how he will enter your soul, and in what garment he will enter you.

Accept Christ, who is able to set you free, and who has taken on the devices of that one, so that through these he might destroy him by deceit. For this is the king whom you have who is forever invincible, against whom no one will be able to fight nor say a word. This is your king and your father, for there is no one like him. The divine teacher is with you always. He is a helper, and he meets you because of the good which is in you.

Do not put maliciousness in your judgment, for every malicious man harms his heart. For only a foolish man is wont to his destruction, but a wise man knows his way.

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And a foolish man does not guard against speaking (a) mystery: A wise man (however) does not blurt out every word, but he will be discriminating toward those who hear. Do not mention everything in the presence of those whom you do not know.

Have a great number of friends, but not counsellors. First, examine your counsellor, for do not honour anyone who flatters. Their word, to be sure, is sweet as honey, but their heart is full of hellebore. For whenever they think that they have become a reliable friend, then they will deceitfully turn against you, and they will cast you down into the mire.

Do not trust anyone as a friend, for this whole world has come into being deceitfully, and every man is troubled in vain. All things of the world are not profitable, but they happen in vain. There is no one, not even a brother (who is trustworthy), since each one is seeking his own advantage.

My son, do not have anyone as a friend, but if you do acquire one, do not entrust yourself to him. Entrust yourself to God alone as father and as friend. For everyone proceeds deceitfully, while the whole earth is full of suffering and pain - things in which there is no profit. If you wish to pass your life in quiet, do not keep company with anyone. And if you do keep company with them, be as if you do not. Be pleasing to God, and you will not need anyone.

Live with Christ and he will save you. For he is the true light and the sun of life. For just as the sun which is visible and makes light for the eyes of the flesh, so Christ illuminates every mind and the heart. For (if) a wicked man (who is) in the body (has) an evil death, how much more so (does) he who has his mind blind. For every blind man goes along in such a way that he is seen just as one who does not have his mind sane. He does not delight in acquiring the light of Christ, which is reason.

For everything which is visible is a copy of that which is hidden. For as a fire which burns in a place without being confined to it, so it is with the sun which is in the sky, all of whose rays extend to places on the earth. Similarly, Christ has a single being, and he gives light to every place. This is also the way in which he speaks of our mind, as if it were a lamp which

burns and lights up the place. (Being) in a part of the soul, it gives light to all the parts.

Furthermore, I shall speak of what is more exalted than this: the mind, with respect to actual being, is in a place, which means it is in the body; but with respect to thought, the mind is not in a place. For how can it be in a place, when it contemplates every place?

But we are able to mention what is more exalted than this: for do not think in your heart that God exists in a place. If you localize the Lord of all in a place, then it is fitting for you to say that the place is more exalted than he who dwells in it. For that which contains is more exalted than that which is contained. For there is no place which is called incorporeal. For it is not right for us to say that God is corporeal. For the consequence (would be) that we (must) attribute both increase and decrease to the corporeal, but also that he (God) who is subject to these will not remain imperishable.

Now, it is not difficult to know the Creator of all creatures, but it is impossible to comprehend the likeness of this One. For it is difficult not only for men to comprehend God, but it is (also) difficult for every divine being, (both) the angels and the archangels. It is necessary to know God as he is. You cannot know God through anyone except Christ, who has the image of the Father, for this image reveals the true likeness in correspondence to that which is revealed. A king is not usually known apart from an image.

Consider these things about God: he is in every place; on the other hand, he is in no place. With respect to power, to be sure, he is in every place; but with respect to divinity, he is in no place. So then, it is possible to know God a little. With respect to his power, he fills every place, but in the exaltation of his divinity, nothing contains him. Everything is in God, but God is not in anything.

Now what is it to know God? God is all which is in the truth. But it is as impossible to look at Christ as at the sun. God sees everyone; no one looks at him. But Christ, without being jealous, receives and gives. He is the

Light of the Father, as he gives light without being jealous. In this manner he gives light to every place.

And all is Christ, he who has inherited all from the Existent One. For Christ is the idea of incorruptibility, and he is the Light which is shining undefiled. For the sun (shines) on every impure place, and yet it is not defiled. So it is with Christ: even if he is in the deficiency, yet he is without deficiency. And even if he has been begotten, he is (still) un-begotten. So it is with Christ: if, on the one hand, he is comprehensible, on the other, he is incomprehensible with respect to his actual being. Christ is all. He who does not possess all is unable to know Christ.

My son, do not dare to say a word about this One, and do not confine the God of all to mental images. For he who condemns may not be condemned by the one who condemns. Indeed, it is good to ask and to know who God is. Reason and mind are male names. Indeed, let him who wishes to know about this One, quietly and reverently ask. For there is no small danger in speaking about these things, since you know that you will be judged on the basis of everything that you say.

And understand by this that he who is in darkness will not be able to see anything unless he receives the light and recovers (his) sight by means of it. Examine yourself (to see) whether you wholly have the light, so that, if you ask about these things, you may understand how you will escape. For many are seeking in darkness, and they grope about, wishing to understand, since there is no light for them.

My son, do not allow your mind to stare downward, but rather, let it look by means of the light at things above. For the light will always come from above. Even if it (the mind) is upon the earth, let it seek to pursue the things above. Enlighten your mind with the light of heaven, so that you may turn to the light of heaven.

Do not tire of knocking on the door of reason, and do not cease walking in the way of Christ. Walk in it so that you may receive rest from your labours. If you walk in another way, there will be no profit in it. For also those who walk in the broad way will go down at their end to the perdition

of the mire. For the Underworld is open wide for the soul, and the place of perdition is broad. Accept Christ, the narrow way. For he is oppressed and bears affliction for your sin.

O soul, persistent one, in what ignorance you exist! For who is your guide into the darkness? How many likenesses did Christ take on because of you! Although he was God, he was found among men as a man. He descended to the Underworld. He released the children of death. They were in travail, as the scripture of God has said. And he sealed up the (very) heart of it (the Underworld). And he broke its (the Underworld's) strong bows completely. And when all the powers had seen him, they fled, so that he might bring you, wretched one, up from the Abyss, and might die for you as a ransom for your sin. He saved you from the strong hand of the Underworld.

But you, yourself, difficult (though it be) give to him your fundamental assent with (even so much as) a hint that he may take you up with joy! Now the fundamental choice, which is humility of heart, is the gift of Christ. A contrite heart is the acceptable sacrifice. If you humble yourself, you will be greatly exalted; and if you exalt yourself, you will be exceedingly humbled.

My son, guard yourself against wickedness, and do not let the Spirit of Wickedness cast you down into the Abyss. For he is mad and bitter. He is terrifying, and he casts everyone down into a pit of mire.

It is a great and good thing not to love fornication, and not even to think of the wretched matter at all, for to think of it is death. It is not good for any man to fall into death. For a soul which has been found in death will be without reason. For it is better not to live than to acquire an animal's life. Protect yourself, lest you are burned by the fires of fornication. For many who are submerged in fire are its servants, whom you do not know as your enemies.

O my son, strip off the old garment of fornication, and put on the garment which is clean and shining, that you may be beautiful in it. But when you have this garment, protect it well. Release yourself from every bond, so

that you may acquire freedom. If you cast out of yourself the desire whose devices are many, you will release yourself from the sins of lust.

Listen, O soul, to my advice. Do not become a den of foxes and snakes, nor a hole of serpents and asps, nor a dwelling place of lions, or a place of refuge of basilisk-snakes. When these things happen to you, O soul, what will you do? For these are the powers of the Adversary. Everything which is dead will come into you through them (the powers). For their food is everything which is dead, and every unclean thing. For when these are within you, what living thing will come into you? The living angels will detest you. You were a temple, (but) you have made yourself a tomb. Cease being a tomb, and become (again) a temple, so that uprightness and divinity may remain in you.

Light the light within you. Do not extinguish it! Certainly, no one lights a lamp for wild beasts or their young. Raise your dead who have died, for they lived and have died for you. Give them life. They shall live again!

For the Tree of Life is Christ. He is Wisdom. For he is Wisdom; he is also the Word. he is the Life, the Power, and the Door. He is the Light, the Angel, and the Good Shepherd. Entrust yourself to this one who became all for your sake.

Knock on yourself as upon a door, and walk upon yourself as on a straight road. For if you walk on the road, it is impossible for you to go astray. And if you knock with this one (Wisdom), you knock on hidden treasures. For since he (Christ) is Wisdom, he makes the foolish man wise.

He (Wisdom) is a holy kingdom and a shining robe. For it (Wisdom) is much gold, which gives you great honour. The Wisdom of God became a type of fool for you, so that it might take you up, O foolish one, and make you a wise man. And the Life died for you when he was powerless, so that through his death, he might give life to you who have died.

Entrust yourself to reason and remove yourself from animalism. For the animal which has no reason is made manifest. For many think that they have reason, but if you look at them attentively, their speech is animalistic.

Give yourself gladness from the true vine of Christ. Satisfy yourself with the true wine, in which there is no drunkenness nor error. For it (the true wine) marks the end of drinking, since there is usually in it what gives joy to the soul and the mind, through the Spirit of God. But first, nurture your reasoning powers before you drink of it (the true wine).

Do not pierce yourself with the sword of sin. Do not burn yourself, O wretched one, with the fire of lust. Do not surrender yourself to barbarians like a prisoner, nor to savage beasts which want to trample upon you. For they are as lions which roar very loudly. Be not dead lest they trample upon you. You shall be man! It is possible for you through reasoning to conquer them.

But the man who does nothing is unworthy of (being called) rational man. The rational man is he who fears God. He who fears God does nothing insolent. And he who guards himself against doing anything insolent is one who keeps his guiding principle. Although he is a man who exists on earth, he makes himself like God.

But he who makes himself like God is one who does nothing unworthy of God, according to the statement of Paul, who has become like Christ.

For who shows reverence for God while not wanting to do things which are pleasing to him? For piety is that which is from the heart, and piety from the heart (characterizes) every soul which is near to God.

The soul which is a member of God's household is one which is kept pure, and the soul which has put on Christ is one which is pure. It is impossible for it to sin. Now where Christ is, there sin is idle.

Let Christ alone enter your world, and let him bring to naught all powers which have come upon you. Let him enter the temple which is within you, so that he may cast out all the merchants. Let him dwell in the temple which is within you, and may you become for him a priest and a Levite, entering in purity. Blessed are you, O soul, if you find this one in your temple.

Blessed are you still more if you perform his service.

But he who will defile the temple of God, that one God will destroy. For you lay yourself open, O man, if you cast this one out of your temple. For whenever the enemies do not see Christ in you, then they will come into you armed in order to crush you.

O my son, I have given you orders concerning these things many times so that you would always guard your soul. It is not you who will cast him (Christ) out, but he will cast you out. For if you flee from him, you will fall into great sin. Again, if you flee from him, you will become food for your enemies. For all base persons flee from their lord, and the (man) base in virtue and wisdom flees from Christ. For every man who is separated (from him) falls into the claws of wild beasts.

Know who Christ is, and acquire him as a friend, for this is the friend who is faithful. He is also God and Teacher. This one, being God, became man for your sake. It is this one who broke the iron bars of the Underworld, and the bronze bolts. It is this one who attacked and cast down every haughty tyrant. It is he who loosened from himself the chains of which he had taken hold. He brought up the poor from the Abyss and the mourners from the Underworld. It is he who humbled the haughty powers; he who put to shame haughtiness through humility; he who has cast down the strong and the boaster through weakness; he who, in his contempt, scorned that which is considered an honour, so that humility for God's sake might be highly exalted; (and) he who has put on humanity.

And yet, the divine Word is God, he who bears patiently with man always. He wished to produce humility in the exalted. He (Christ), who has exalted man became like God, not in order that he might bring God down to man, but that man might become like God.

O this great goodness of God! O Christ, King, who has revealed to men the Great Divinity, King of every virtue and King of life, King of ages and Great One of the heavens, hear my words and forgive me!

Furthermore, he manifested a great zeal for Divinity.

Where is a man (who is) wise or powerful in intelligence, or a man whose devices are many because he knows wisdom? Let him speak wisdom; let him utter great boasting! For every man has become a fool and has spoken out of his (own) knowledge. For he (Christ) confounded the counsels of guileful people, and he prevailed over those wise in their own understanding.

Who will be able to discover the counsel of the Almighty, or to speak of the Divinity, or to proclaim it correctly? If we have not even been able to understand the counsels of our companions, who will be able to comprehend the Divinity, or the divinities of the heavens? If we scarcely find things on earth, who will search for the things of heaven? A great power and great glory has made the world known.

And the Life of Heaven wishes to renew all, that he may cast out that which is weak, and every black form, that everyone may shine forth in heavenly garments in order to make manifest the command of the Father (who) is exceedingly brilliant, and that he (Christ) may crown those wishing to contend well. Christ, being judge of the contest, is he who crowned every one, teaching every one to contend. This one who contended first received the crown, gained dominion, and appeared, giving light to everyone. And all were made new through the Holy Spirit and the Mind.

O Lord Almighty, how much glory shall I give Thee? No one has been able to glorify God adequately. It is Thou who hast given glory to Thy Word in order to save everyone, O Merciful God. (It is) he who has come from Thy mouth and has risen from Thy heart, the First-born, the Wisdom, the Prototype, the First Light.

For he is light from the power of God, and he is an emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty. He is the spotless mirror of the working of God, and he is the image of his goodness. For he is also the light of the Eternal Light. He is the eye which looks at the invisible Father, always serving and forming by the Father's will. He alone was begotten by the Father's good pleasure. For he is an incomprehensible Word, and he is Wisdom and Life. He gives life to, and nourishes, all living things and powers. Just

as the soul gives life to all the members, he rules all with power and gives life to them. For he is the beginning and the end of everyone, watching over all and encompassing them. He is troubled on behalf of everyone, and he rejoices and also mourns. On the one hand, he mourns for those who have gotten as their lot the place of punishment; on the other, he is troubled about every one whom he arduously brings to instruction. But he rejoices over everyone who is in purity.

Then beware, lest somehow you fall into the hands of robbers. Do not allow sleep to your eyes nor drowsiness to your eyelids, that you may be saved like a gazelle from nets, and like a bird from a trap.

Fight the great fight as long as the fight lasts, while all the powers are staring after you - not only the holy ones, but also all the powers of the Adversary. Woe to you if you are vanquished in the midst of every one who is watching you! If you fight the fight and are victorious over the powers which fight against you, you will bring great joy to every holy one, and yet great grief to your enemies. Your judge helps (you) completely, since he wants you to be victorious.

Listen, my son, and do not be slow with your ears. Raise yourself up when you have left your old man behind like an eagle. Fear God in all your acts, and glorify him through good work. You know that every man who is not pleasing to God is the son of perdition. He will go down to the Abyss of the Underworld.

O this patience of God, which bears with every one, which desires that every one who has become subject to sin be saved!

But no one prevents him (God) from doing what he wants. For who is stronger than him, that he may prevent him? To be sure, it is he who touches the earth, causing it to tremble and also causing the mountains to smoke. (It is) he who has gathered together such a great sea as in a leather bag, and has weighed all the water on his scales. Only the hand of the Lord has created all these things. For this hand of the Father is Christ, and it forms all. Through it, all has come into being, since it became the mother of all. For he is always Son of the Father.

Consider these things about God Almighty, who always exists: this One was not always King, for fear that he might be without a divine Son. For all dwell in God, (that is), the things which have come into being through the Word, who is the Son as the image of the Father.

For God is nearby; he is not far off. All divine limits are those which belong to God's household. Therefore, if the divine agrees with you partially in anything, know that all of the Divine agrees with you. But this divine is not pleased with anything evil. For it is this which teaches all men what is good. This is what God has given to the human race, so that for this reason every man might be chosen before all the angels and the archangels.

For God does not need to put any man to the test. He knows all things before they happen, and he knows the hidden things of the heart. They are all revealed and found wanting in his presence. Let no one ever say that God is ignorant. For it is not right to place the Creator of every creature in ignorance. For even things which are in darkness are before him like (things in) the light.

So, there is no other one hidden except God alone. But he is revealed to everyone, and yet he is very hidden. He is revealed because God knows all. And if they do not wish to affirm it, they will be corrected by their heart. Now he is hidden because no one perceives the things of God. For it is incomprehensible and unfathomable to know the counsel of God. Furthermore, it is difficult to comprehend him, and it is difficult to find Christ. For he is the one who dwells in every place, and also he is in no place. For no one who wants to will be able to know God as he actually is, nor Christ, nor the Spirit, nor the chorus of angels, nor even the archangels, as well as the thrones of the spirits, and the exalted lordships, and the Great Mind. If you do not know yourself, you will not be able to know all of these.

Open the door for yourself, that you may know the One who is. Knock on yourself, that the Word may open for you. For he is the Ruler of Faith and the Sharp Sword, having become all for everyone because he wishes to have mercy on everyone.

The Teachings of Silvanus

My son, prepare yourself to escape from the world-rulers of darkness and of this kind of air, which is full of powers. But if you have Christ, you will conquer this entire world. That which you open for yourself, you will open. That which you knock upon for yourself, you will knock upon, benefiting yourself.

Help yourself, my son, (by) not proceeding with things in which there is no profit.

My son, first purify yourself toward the outward life, in order that you may be able to purify the inward.

And be not as the merchants of the Word of God.

Put all words to the test before you utter them.

Do not wish to acquire honours which are insecure, nor the boastfulness which brings you to ruin.

Accept the wisdom of Christ, (who is) patient and mild, and guard this, O my son, knowing that God's way is always profitable.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior (Ichthus), Wonder Extraordinary



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