

University of New England

**The Gospel of Truth: Christology,
Deification and the Kingdom of God**

Submitted by

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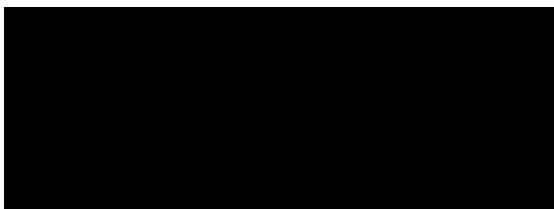
Abstract

The *Gospel of Truth*, rediscovered in 1945 as part of the Nag Hammadi Codices after being hidden in the fourth century, has been extensively studied by scholars in order to ascertain its genre, purpose and place in theological literature. It is agreed by most scholars that it is a Valentinian text and thus adheres to the beliefs of this heterodox early Christian sect, either in an early or advanced form. In contradistinction to this view, it is the position of the present dissertation that the *Gospel of Truth* is best interpreted according to proto-orthodox Christian presuppositions as they relate to the eschatological Kingdom of God and the concomitant deification of Christians. In particular, it is argued that the gnosis of the Father made available through the metaphorical *Book of the Living* published by Christ on the cross is designed to bring about the transformation of both Christians and the world. This thesis was explored by comparing the concept of the Godhead in the *Gospel of Truth* with that of the Valentinians, as expressed through their respective sacramental systems. The results demonstrated that the *Gospel of Truth* is overtly proto-orthodox in its affirmation of the central role of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in the salvation/glorification process of Christians. In addition, an examination of the deification theories of three prominent second century Christians, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons and Clement of Alexandria, demonstrated the *Gospel of Truth's* close affinity with their proto-orthodox views of the Godhead and the eschatological Kingdom of God. It was also shown that the *Gospel of Truth's* focus on chrism/anointing for the purpose of sealing Christians for the kingdom of Christ, as well as its motifs of the Divine Name, the Unity, the Sabbath eschatological rest, the perfect day and the divine will that the totality be saved represents a further development in New Testament soteriological themes.

Certification of Thesis

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that the ideas, analyses, results, and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged.



21 December 2015

Signature of Candidate

Date

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Abbreviations

<i>AH</i>	<i>Against Heresies</i>
<i>ANF</i>	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
<i>CGL</i>	<i>Coptic Gnostic Library</i>
<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching</i>
<i>Exc. Theod.</i>	<i>Excerpts of Theodotus</i>
<i>GosPhil</i>	<i>Gospel of Philip</i>
<i>GosTr</i>	<i>Gospel of Truth</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>KJV</i>	<i>King James Version</i>
<i>NKJV</i>	<i>New King James Version</i>
<i>NIV</i>	<i>New International Version</i>
<i>Qu. Gen.</i>	<i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
<i>Sir</i>	<i>Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>Wis</i>	<i>Wisdom of Solomon</i>

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